

WARLIKE SNIPS AND SNAPS

LETTERS WRITTEN BY
BABU PICHE LAL, B.A.,
FROM MESOPOTAMIA.

BY
C. G. L.

BOMBAY
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Mr. EDITOR. Esq.,

The Times of India Illustrated Weekly Newspaper.

My Dear Sir,

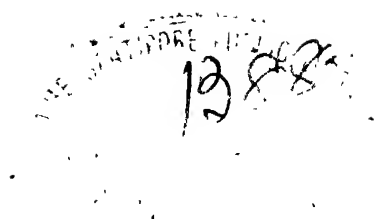
I have honour to beg that inditing attached " Warlike Snips and Snaps " It is not great Heavens No ! in order to play humptiously my own trump, but since my great numbers of Friends and Lovers are many times telling and telling me to do so saying you are now at very War-seat, and every News is at finger-tips You are B.A and regular Wiseacre to boot it.

To each and every, I reply Oho ! Don't mention it these are empty flatterings I am but humble babu in transport Mule Corps. My pate is mayhap not devoid of literary smatterings and eruditions, but Wiseacre No ! But more as I refuse ever so much the more do they become vociferous until last of all, in obedience, I take up my " currente calamo " with intention of communicating to Highly Esteemed Periodical one Essay on The Great War Hebdomadally (i.e. weekly) with kind regards

I have, etc..

PICHE LAL, B.A. ✓

Basrah



*These letters were first published in
The Times of India Illustrated Weekly.*

*NOTE — All the characters in this series are entirely imaginary
If there should really be a Captain Beresford, a Piche Lal, &c.
in Mesopotamia the author is unaware of their existence.*



51, 8, 8

Warlike Snips and Snaps.

I.

Arrival of Author at War-Seat.

How shall Alas ' Alas ' ! my all-too-interior Muse succeed to expatiate all the strange spectacles, visions, and (to employ vernacular vulgarism) " tamasha " visible to the eyes when the S.S. in whom I am sailing from Karachi (2nd class accommodation, without food) having snipped fingers at all Oceanic Perils of " The Watery Waste " has last of all (by nautical parlance) weighed the anchor in Birth No. 22A, Basrah, Base ' My Grecious Heavens ' What a pell-mell and hurley-burley ' In the banks of the shore are camels and horse-carts and motor carts and byle carts and cools (men, women, and even callow offsprings) all scuttling and scampering luther-thither elsewhere and nowhere ' ! To and fro and vice versa ' ! Brisk as bees (or new broons) ' Hurry- skurry ! Higgledy-piggledy ! Full tilt and Devil take the Behindmost ' What a prittle-prattling and chitter-chattering ' As much as (more even) than one flock of pies (mag) or daws (jack) ' ! ! Thus I bemused in my heart watching from deck, (e.g. top parts of ship) So this is in very deed Mesopotamia that great continent which we (e.g. British Empire) have by guns and cannons so gloriously captured and seized ! How one's heart cannot but fail to be unable to refrain from puffing and swelling itself with patriotical prides ! Such sublime thoughts I communicated (orally) to Sergeant Higgins (quarter-master-sergeant to mule-corps) whom I espied swiftly running along with dusty and sweaty visage in near vicinity. Thereupon what did that churlish and malignant

fellow reply to such polite niceties ? He replied as follows, and this is verbatim report and not mendacious locus-pocus. "If you don't see about getting off the office baggage immediately instead of capering about and cackling like a broody hen, I'll clap you in the clink" (cockney slangs for "place in prison") when we arrive to camp "!!! In addition to this he ejaculated other words which not only are undiscoverable in dictionary and whose meanings are entirely non-suited to context. I enquired him to please kindly repeat that I may take copy in note-book for future reference, which he did with even more virulent addendas ! I said with pardonable sharpness "Re this, your miss-statement if I, being small, am hen what are you, being big ? Goose, doubtless!" at which he (being shamed perhaps by these repartees) retired with mutters. I also departed in order to search Captain Beresford, the officer commanding Mule Corps, (a nice and gentle officer) and inform him of this so outrageous unhumanity demanding that without doubt Sergeant Higgins should be court-martial forthwith and instantly, or at any rate at early convenience. But though I performed many indefatigable searches, and asked questions of innumerable eye-witnesses I did not find. The last one of these bystanders was a petty nautical officer, who was waving hands strangely in circular motions and staring downwards into very Bowels (metaphorically) of ship. Then when baggage etc. appeared raised cunningly in nets by "cranes" he was crying "Rightaway !" To him I approached and said, Sir please inform me, if known to your good self, whereabouts of Captain J. H. Beresford, S. and T. Corps, to whom I wish to make complaint concerning gross rudenesses of Sergeant Higgins without delay. He said with friendly (as I thought) smile. If you stay here any longer my lad, you'll have two complaints to make, not one concerning gross rudenesses. I replied inapprehendingly, Why so, please ? There-upon marvellous to say without ado he flared out in 1st class tantrum. What all he said I cannot tell, but this I know on unimpeachable evidence, that he was firmly resolved to commit

murder (or at least homicide) on me by hook or crook and with great torments. So without undue loitering I retired to another locality.

Thereafter I became depressed into High Dudgeon by cause of these two "Cold Shoulders," and sat in cabin till fall of dark in moodish respectation. Re Sergeant Higgins I could very well understand, for that N. C. O. is a consummate viper without any mitigations, and always nking and chiding, but the sailing officer, why will he seek to kill me, for addressing him with great civilities? Truly the Anglo-Saxon Race is in my opinion (though I do not wish to stn u racial mimicalities) an Unanalyzable Eugena However in spite, we (e.g. the Transport Mule Corps) after herculeaneous efforts triumphantly attained to camp that same nightfall with all men carts and equines except one mule (absconded surreptitiously during hours of darkness)

Five days later. Pending the above interim, we have remained in camp. I am rather hypochondriac that from this place one cannot see the Battle (or hear) martial news is by this reason rather scantish. But I have "ferieted" one Fact which will be bitter and nasty Pill to swallow for British Statesmenships. *Viz. Up to even nowadays both clerks and Agents of the Supply and Transport Corps have departed, to so bravely fight for King-Emperor and Country in all holes and corners of the Terraqueous Globe without not only Weapons of War in the very least, ether off—or de-fensive but also denied to procure same on payment indent even if so desirous!!! Forsooth!!!* How can man, even however daring fellow, fight with naked fingers? How will Germany sneer and crack her sides!!! I therefore, without ado, indited petition to Secretary of State for India pointing out this disheartening Quandary and Crying shame, and presented to Captain Beresford for favour of forwarding per official channel. That prudent officer (also shocked to core at such gross Neglection of Duty on part of G. of I.) said, Please defer petition and I will make enquiries.

Next day after he informed to me that by recent secret circular of the Quarter-Master-General in India clerks shall draw one halberd, mace, or partisan and agents one hanger or whinger as desired by each respectably.

I enquired Please Sir of what variety and form are these weapons as I am rather ignoring of such armaments.

He replied. The circular is secret. I can tell you no further I advise you to take halberd. and I myself will drill it into you.

I replied. Sir thanks awfully and excuse troubling. So one secret and emergent indent was prepared forthwith for *Halberds with Helves Ashen, one, S. and T. clerks for the Use of, Mark II Star as per Q.M.G.'s circular.*

Then Captain Beresford summoned the Quarter-master Sergeant and said to him with stern visage. This indent is to be drawn by you in person from the Engineer Field Park at the earliest possible moment Delay might be matter of Death or Life He also said that there is much old and mouldy stock of such armaments despatched from Tower of London. (England). These on no account accept, but only bran new.

At which in place of reply that doltish tom-tool (Sergeant Higgins) began to smile and smirk with all his visible faculties though concealing same from Captain Beresford I was about to draw attention to this so perky rudeness, when the Captain Sahib went outside from office and also Sergeant Higgins. Next day I received halberd as per preceding para. Doubtless its weight is trifling uncommodious (being $4\frac{1}{2}$ seers approx.) but it is very stout and powerful organ. The stick is long to extent of $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet and on extremity is to be found one sharp spear Beside this, there is on one side axe (*i.e.* hatchet) and on other side spike or pick. Indeed the whole is a heterogenous panoply by which, according to word of Captain Beresford, no less than three men can be contemporaneously killed with one knock (if skilful). Now we shall see if these arabic Turks and other

wild and savage men will seek to do a mischief with me when they espy that Great Arm ! I will write more voluminously and redundantly next week because now I am worked " up to eyes " and excessively responsible

PICHE LAL, B.A.

POEM

Now like brave warrior I shall not blench
Marching swiftly to Battle on attacking Bloody Trench
Thro' roaring of Cannons and Gunpowder's Stench
I shall indeed be Brave Man and not Cowardly Wench.
(Original Poetry not Quotation).

PICHE LAL, B.A.

II.

Mostly Individualistic Goings-on.

I am very regrettable that official War News from this seat is Alackaday! not in the least forthcoming. From private sauce, however, I have gleaned following Tit Bits (or as we journalistic say "Totally Exclusive Scoops") (a) Sub-Conductor O'Hanlon S. and T Corps. The above worthy and intelligent warrant officer states

This morning at 6-53 a.m. I received (per Wireless Installation) a cypher message from my brother John Thomas, a prisoner-of-war in Turkey, which avers stoutly that Turkish Army has in totality retired velocitously to top of Mount Ararat as "Forlorn Hope" Also that General Enver Pasha Sahib has perpetrated desertion and is now serving as drill havildar in the 42nd Gurkha Hussars (b) Sergt Higgins begs to ratify above information but states that General Enver Pasha is not at all havildar, but temporary lance nank in Army Beaten Corps, with duty of refilling the syringes (hypodermic) at all Parades for Cholera Injection This he was told by the Director of Medical Services in actual person.

As to whichever bulletin is veracious I am rather ambiguous, but I would add that for information of readers that I have on multifarious occasions verified Sergeant Higgins to be peccable of glaring mendacities. (I E only one fortnight since he sneakishly told to Captain Beresford that I (Piche Lal) have made unpleasant grimaces before him (Sergeant Higgins) and protruded tongue in insolent manner. This was a very base falsehood, which I explained to Captain Beresford, saying that I have then most anguishing caries, i.e., rotten tooth, and it tongue did by chance exude, which I deny in toto, it was by

reason of excruciating spasms and not at all in token of contempt though well-deserved).

But turning aside from Imperial Situations to myself. what a sad tale to unfold!! All the Devil-to-Pay and no bones about it!!!

To wit, I on the 26th ult. at 5 p.m. approx. proceeded seated on "bike" to visit bazaar. That new and nice halberd which I received on indent last week I attached with care and strong string to bicycle saying in heart, now these Arabic Turks will having seen this be fearful to misbehave me.

The roads in bazaar being narrow to unheard extent, on turning corner in Bridge Street what shall my startled eyes espy but flocks of numerous asses carrying in sackings earth and dirt, I ring bell with vehemency and cry out to ass-attendants to Beware! Beware! But the more I ring and cry and ring the more devil-may-care do they proceed unheedless. I would willingly come down from "bike" but then these wild asses will perhaps savagely strike and kick me. Lastly one female ass came awfully swiftly running in such a manner that her right hand rump impinged upon the sharp prick of the halberd which I am transporting so that it was considerably pierced. I myself was contemporaneously overwhelmed to the ground with Crash and Smash, and all the dirt came flying and falling on me to boot it!!!

When my senses have returned in slight manner, I apprehend firstly on the one side a crowd of vernacular ne'er-do-weels and vagrants each and every one shouting and vocifering, and secondly on the other side one large stout European man in Sergeant's attire of the Military Police, who was speaking to these and writing in note-book.

The latter then turned to me and said with moody mien. pointing first to bloody halberd and then to punctured ass.

"What have you got to say"?

What have I (Piche Lal) got to say? I so innocent who have been so grievously unhandled by these vile men and their

asses !!! I gasped aloud again and again !!! So this I reply with bitter sneerings. This is the much-vaunted Justice of The British Raj ? !! This is the Glorious Heritage bequeathed to us by——But he rudely interrupted saying without sense or reason. “This is not Hyde Park (sic!) give your evidence.”

After upbraiding him with further acrimony, I replied that I was highly-educated and honourable Indian gentleman, drawing Rs. 40 per mensem (without counting batta) in distinguished corps. I was riding very slowly bicycle and ringing bell always, when a female ass, with firm intention it appeared of destroying herself, came and transfixed her rump on my halberd and subverting me and bicycle in one pell-mell and not contenting with even that she had then emptied all the dirt from her sackings over me while I lay down in witness whereof please kindly examine this unsightly scab on the front side of my waist-coat which formerly a handsome apparel is now a perfect scarecrow. I also demand Rs. 100 as trifling honorarium for

- (i) bumps to body, legs, arms, head, etc.,
- (ii) injury to clothings,
- (iii) gross humiliation to inner self.

Then that coarse sergeant laughed loud and said. If you giddy young fellows will come careering down the streets of a civilized town on pig-sticking pic-nics (Where, pray, were the pigs??) armed with medieval weapons you'll have to pay for it. I will say, though, that you made a very fair shot. They ought to put you in the Lancers. You're wasted in the S. and T. Corps.

(With such slangs and sarcasms did he villainously twit me).

He then said I'd better give you a policeman to take you back to camp. These gentry might be tempted to try for themselves the edge of that nice little—*What* do you call it by the way?

Gentry I cried you call these nobodies, these dirty Dicks and Toms and Harries and loose livers gentry while me you

call giddy young fellows. To me at least it appears that you are rather too hob-nobby with this contractor. are not you ? With that Parthian and apt shot I wended back to camp in unmitigated umbrage and immediately indited petition to Secretary of State for India praying him to sift this murky case to the dregs and I am hoping Mr. Editor Esq., that if you or any readers know (with intimation) that Wise and Good Officer, they or you (or he or she as the case may be) will communicate with His Excellency sine die on my poor behalf. and I shall ever pray for your longish life and auspicious prosperity

PICHE LAL B.A.

Fairplay is jewel all wise Men assert
So Justice I plead for me so awfully hurt.
With Body all battered and tattered shirt
And all-innocent rolled humbously in the Dirt.
(Original not Quotation)

PICHE LAL, B.A.

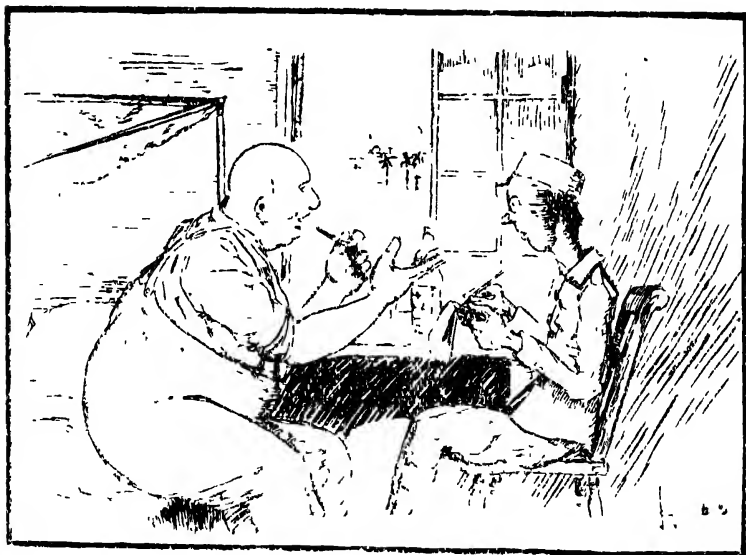
III.

The Scoop of the Epock.

I think with dilating Pride upon this present Bulletin which is truly, as I have wittily labelled ab initio, "The Scoop of the Epock," and will, Sir, without shadow of doubt cause to accrue to you Honours and Envyies above all other antagonistical Newsmongers.

All the whole story is quam sequitur, viz. I learnt in casual chatterings that Sergeant Peabody, STC, is very amicable with Mr. Donald Mackay, head-mechanical at the Bastia Wireless Installation. Ahah! I said in my heart, The Seat of News! After that without ado I exclaimed with careless men to Sergeant Peabody I have a strong desire to witness these wireless machinations. Perhaps also Mr. Mackay Sahib will know some new news. Please give me a clut to him as introductory measure, and much oblige. He did so willingly, so bearing this missive I sped forth with much excitations in sultry noontide weather seated on bicycle, entirely careless of extensive perspirations. After becoming senseless (almost) by furious exertions, and the lavish decrement of adipose tissues, I arrived at destination and without difficulty discover said mechanical fellow, and tendered such epistle which he perused with gusto. (He is of a globular and indeed whopping body, and rubicundish visage infested with hairs of a foxy tint but nevertheless of a benevolent and social demeanour). He says with beaming chuckles and smirks and speaking with Caledonian "brogues" (to which I am by lucky chance not unfamiliar) that if you want News of War for Indian Papers I myself am the man to give them to you and you have come to the Right Shop: (sic.) with that in token doubtless of hearty fraternity he not only knocked his own bosom with

violent Whack, but me also on the left humerous. After which rather waggishly clapping thumb tight to nostril in sign of pre-eminent cautions, he buttonholed me into his personal dormitory, and fast closed door of that. Thereupon, having both seated, he was discoursing in hoarse whisperings for more than one hour and I was all the time writing myself in urgent fidget not in the least interrupting flow of chit-chat but only to say "Losh Mon!" or "Hoots Toots, aweel, aweel!" as instructed previously to me by Sergeant Peabody (being national Scottish expressions of joyful surprise, and indeed clearly gratifying to Mr. Mackay Sahib who humorously buffeted me more than once in hearty commendations until I pushed clear backwards rather).



"He was discoursing for over an hour."

I will now propose to disquise in baldish brevity the News which he imported to me aghast and agog, which will, I flatter, convulse like a thunderclap all India and indeed civilised globe to their bottommost cores.

[If you can, Mr. Editor, print with red inks it would be better and I hotly recommend. Piche Lal.]

News from Basara Wireless.

Students of World's Geography will perhaps know that in Arabia is the zillah or district of Palestine nicknamed The Sacred Land. In this locality besides other features there are two big Seas or Lakes, named respectfully "Dead" and "Galilee," upon the waters of each the Arabic Turks (Germans aiding and abetting) have with scientific savour-faires fashioned in underhand stealths naval fleets of warships up to incredible numbers. From these points) (what incarnate cunning!) They are Devils, believe me!) they have with superhuman arduosities extracted a canal (artificially through sandy deserts, until now (August 18th, 2-35 p.m.) they have attained to 8½ miles from Port Said, an Egyptian city. It would seem that their object is perhaps to attack Egyptian Dominions at an early date.

Up till nowadays they had with tricky subterfuge concealed this canal from birds-eye-views by khaki cloths and paulans, and also masts and riggings of ships with sprigs and greens, so that an eye-witness will think these are vegetations doubtless. Therefore has gallant British Army been nescient of such goings-on, and are thus impossible of negligent blannings. But danger being so damnablely urgent, all the British Naval Fleet of Empire is coming pellmell and heller-skelter, leaving behind to guard "Chalky Cliffs of Old Albion" only some torpedoes (a small craft, but very swift) and minotauris (a new invention, whose design, even if I were to do so, Censor forbids in toto) and other small fries. Meantime calculation has been made by "Powers-To-Be" that rival fleets will contact with each other in Suez Canal next Tuesday week for the Battle which I will awfully term "The Aqueous Armageddon of Historiography."

To comment upon such monumentous Welt-politics by a mere Indian babu would be a regular Anti-Bathos, so I shall decline, saying merely that for my part I have whatsoever no doubt that Turks will rue with much bitter gnashings their temerarious inaugurations

POEM.

Britannia rules the Waves, so Blast the Trumpet '
Oh Rash Turks ! Back you will have to stump it '
Yes indeed, whether you like it or lump it.
And as for your canal we shall certainly pump it.
(Chorus) Yes Britannia shall "crump" it
(i. e. very hotly bombard it)

PICHE LAL. B.A.

P.S.—My friend Doctor Hatu Rumi states as his opinion that this Poem or Lyric is good but not so good As extenuations I beg to say

(i) The metre is a very audacious one being humble imitation of late Mr. J Milton

(ii) Some words there are which though nicely rhyming, are grossly unsuitable to context Hence inclusion of slangs and pithy sayings perforce and wilfully.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

IV.

Snubs, Browbeats and Contumeliousnesses.

Since 4 days (including nights) Carking Care was gnawing my heart-strings, during which period my poor eye-balls alackaday! have not one whit or tittle ceased to be suffused with teary excretions but all the time weeping and deploring and suspiring with bitter groans and belchings.

Arc! Arc! Ram! Rām! I cry like the bereaved ladies of my so-sweet Indian home-steads! Arc! Arc! For I am ruined to Sempiternity! Sacrificed and Oblated (bloodily) on Altars of Despotical Devil-may-Cares! But who has done this shameful and highly cruel enormity you will ask? Read please you Just Peoples, and cry too, perhaps in your turns each and each

In the first place (soon following my second Hebdomedary Bulletine) I indited to The Director of Medical Services the following communication (copy attached for easy reference):
Sir,

I have much honour to request that you have lately informed with your identical lips to Sergeant Higgins, Supply and Transport Corps, to the effect that General Enver Pasha Sahib Bahadur has committed desertion from Turkish Army and is now lance-naiik in Army Bearer Corps under your Honour's Kind Supervision, delegated with duty of refilling syringes, hypodermic at the cholera injections.

Kindly confirm and oblige, as important Journal clamours for news of war, awfully sorry for troubling in so urgent predicament, and with customary prayers and imprecations (re longevity and prosperous career, etc).

I have, Sir, the Honour to be,

PICHE LAL, B.A.

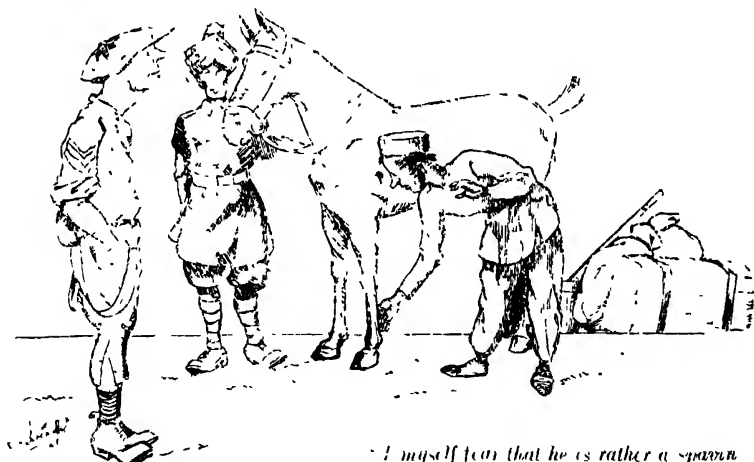
Can any one man (or woman) state with verisimilitude that the above is not model of gentile decorum? I trow not. In conformation with consignee's instructions, duly received, I hied myself to his office at appointed time rubbing hands with glee and capers, thinking Oho! Now I shall learn some pukka Delphic Oracles!!

I remained there for 10½ minutes (approximately) and, though oftentimes essaying, was prevented to emit from tongue even *one* word. What all he said in malisons and bitter chiddings, secunliness forbids to repeat. But, I am privily of opinion that (temporarily) he became a Passionate Maniac. Also, even if Sergeant Higgins (that Underhanded Viper) has committed utter falsehood to me, (confidingly) concerning him (Director) why will he (Director) be malicious and spleenish with me (Piche Lal)? In all cases I deny as most base and scurrilous fib that I am a "loathly and abhorrent little mountebank"

Being vilipended with such (and other) abominable reproaches I was bound by Honour to report whole case to The Director of Supplies and Transport. And now perhaps we will see (I thought) what that good and Kind Officer will say to such reflections on a member (even if humble) of his Beloved and Honourable Corps. But having attained into that august office, and descanting with lachrymatory spasms, the whole shameful tale, how was I agog and aghast! when I heard that Personality, whom, of yore, I always worship as Father-Of-Fathers and Superior All-in-All, ejaculate with strident cacophony, "Oh, he called you a loathly little mountebank did he? Well, I thoroughly agree with him. *Thoroughly*. And as for this contemptible twaddle."—Here he tapped with infuriated and palsied finger upon a document which I quickly espied was my recent communication (*vide* last week's Bulletin) informing him of the Turkish conspiracy to attack Egyptian Dominions *via* Jericho Port-Said Canal, all the time tapping, and vituperating with even grosser licence than the Director

of Medical Services himself. not stopping even for one second until I. becoming very timid lest he may misbehave me eluded swiftly from office.

My cup is full you will think ? Not so The next morning, I was compelled to go to Remount Depot, with sais, to receive one horse kindly arranged for my own riding purposes by Captain Beresford. In that place was one European fellow with 3 stripes upon arm. whom I suspected to be perhaps a corporal. The latter firstly enquired what sort of a horse do you fancy ?



"I myself fear that he is rather a spavin"

With intention to show to him that I am not altogether a dull in equine slangs and metaphors, I reply with careless mien "Oh, if possible I like either gelding or Whaler-horse." With that for no whatever reason he proceeded to Sniggle and guflaw immoderately. Lastly, he produced a large European horse, of dunnish hue. I then (showing no fear or hesitation) rubbed hand upwards and downwards on front legs in "horsy" mannerisms, and replied "I myself fear, that he is rather a spavin." Being irked by his demeanour which again became excessively risible I said sharply "Pray tell me his name." To this (he not replying but only laughing) I said I shall in all

events call him Alexander the Great. He said, you can if you like; the poor dumb beast can't complain. But she's a mare.

I examined the equine more intimately, and said yes he is a female. Your surmise is correct. Please inform me how old is she, and what does she like to eat and drink also. He then assured me that said equine invariably browsed upon grape-nuts and pickled onions—that and nothing else—while for bibulous purposes, nothing but Eiffel Tower Lemonade was the least avail. Also that her age was 47½ by the Stud-Book. Being firmly convinced that his tone was sarcastically inclined, I somewhat naturally became also rather a Sardonic, and re his last remark begged him to inform me what connection is there pray between an equine and a publication which is clearly a hosiery-catalogue. I also informed him that he was without doubt an unduly perky fellow, and I should on no account accept horse, (i.e. mare) as he was a clear spavin, also his tail was most unsightly scarecrow. I was about to say more when looking behind, I apprehended about five officers who had approached by stealths, from which one emerged and began to speak with great gusto.

Before he spoke three, four, words I said in my heart "This is a Director." And indeed he was so, being the Director of Remounts. Re his verbiage, I will not make reference in Christian-like journal more than merely to say that my opinion is that in gifts of Glib he is (even in the Directorial Category) easily the King of Glibs. He is also going to report me to The Director of Supplies and Transport forthwith and instantler. That goodfellow Doctor Hatu Ram has addressed to me many consolational aphorisms, pointing out, and truly, that there are in this vicinity at least two Directors who have no single complaint against my moralities. The Directors of (i) Railways and (ii) Postal Services. Also he is cock-certain that even on warfare, a sentence of Death is entirely a Non Possumus. I cannot write more than this.

P.S.—My Muse being utterly dumb'd by Despair, I shall not have written usual Weekly Poesy, but Captain Beresford (O. C. Mule Corps) has with incredible benignancy and loving-kindness written for myself (*vide* attached). But he wishing to remain a nonentity, I have appended, signature. To praise it, "t' were but to paint Lily." I will merely say that in my opinion it is "The Sublimity of Unearthly Musics."

ODE

To all Directors of Departmental Services for Information
and Favour of Necessary Action.

By

PICHE LAL, B.A.

My Idea of Director
Is a Guide and a Rector.
In Distress, a Protector;
Of Wrath a Deflector.
Of Drafts an Expecter.
(If they come) an Inspector.
Of Promotions, Elector.
And of Merit, Erector.
Of Hairs No Bisector.
Of Marc's Nests, no Conlector.
In Straits, no Dejecter.
Nor from Friends a Defector.
In Plans a Reflector.
Of Advice a Collector.
A skilful Dissector,
Of the Verba Disjecta
And the final Selector.
Of the Ratio Recta.
(i. E. The Perfecter)
Of Agenda Projecta.
Though he's far circumspector
Than to be a Suspector,
Yet if, in his Sector,

There are Faults, he's Detector,
And eke a Corrector,
Mayhap, Disinfector.
But there's Pain in his Pector,
And his Words are like Nectar ,
Never once will he hector,
Like Ogre or Spectre,
But "mıhrbani se dekta"
He will just be Director.

V.

Indeterminate Multifariousnesses.

Hip—Hip—Hip—Hurry ! Hip—Hip—Hip—Hip—Hurry !
 Oh my, what a good Fortune ! 3 cheers (and three times three times) for the sake of The Director of Army Remounts !! Indeed he is never-to-be sufficiently eulogized, sterling, prime fellow. Last week he stated with emphatical addendas that I will report you (Piche Lal) to Director of Supplies and Transport for blasted insolence and irregular conducts. This week, he has promised (in writing) his firm intention to let Bygone be Bygone. Not only that, but he has sent to me to hotly invite me to deliver lecture on subject of "The Horse," to the Officers of The Remount Establishment. So I have sent urgent memo. accepting with fervent pride and gladness so honourable proposal, although at the same time rather oppressed with twinges of modesty before a congregation of such knowing and cavalierish equestrians. But I will work with might and also main, and who knows but even a humble S and T babu may not (perchance) inform to these proud "Philips"* some tit-bits and modicums of Equine Science so far beyond their kens ? For instance the very radical fact that Horse is a quadrupedal mammal of gregarious habitudes and grammivorous idiosyncracies may possibly be unknown to some of them (jannor ones perhaps).

But to turn aside from my insignificant (comparatively) self to more Imperial Issuings, I am proud and glad to be able to inform you that The War in This Sector is proceeding with Great Satisfaction. The Munitionary Crisis now thanks to great God and in part also to Mr. George Lloyd, M.P.,

* NOTE BY EDITOR — Mr. Piche Lal is rather apt to assume that his readers' erudition is equal to his own. It may be that some of us have forgotten that the name, which is Greek in origin, means "a lover of horses."

is a totally exploded Bogey, and there are now so much galores of each and everything, such as guns and cannons and bullets great and small and mines and spiked wires to such an incredible conjection that even if I were kindly allowed by Arch-Censor to mention, you and your good readers being civilians could not comprehend such technics. So I will not do. As for us Fighting Men, I shall venture to vouch, Believe me, that we have now reached The Acme of Ready Aye Ready for Anything in the least. Also that for Bravery we are like a herd of Snippets straining in the leashes waiting with impatient grudges to when our G.O.C. may with nude sword sparkling cry stertorously "Forward! Charge onward to Baghdad (at least) Oh brave Subordinates!" Then how with giaddish hearts shall we run and scamper! You will see. And all that we have. Lives and Weals and Woes, we lay down before thy Toes, Oh Great Suckling Mother (Brit. Emp.) Take it all we pray, because we don't care a bit.

Such in fact is our unparalleled abnegatory Sublimity.

In view of such universal heroical qualities, (*vide* preceding para) it is painful jar to find totally shocking lack of adequate emoluments particularly among Indian Transport Clerks

There is no doubt that this worthy and highly clerical class go to bed nightly swooning with excess of responsible State work - Hammer and Tongs, Thick and Thin. And in return they uncomplainingly receive monthly a dole so indigently stintish that I do not dare to exactly stipulate it, lest G. of I. may be made utterly bashful. Poor fellows! What I hotly recommend is that as temporary measure all pay, batta, etc., of Indian Transport Clerks shall be doctored until some pukka procedure is available to abolish such cryng anomalies. Perhaps, now that ventilation has been made in your columns per oram of a literatic and not uninfluential compositor, G. of I. may become rather Pins and Needles. Let us see. In all cases the total sum in issue is a mere bug-bite.

To-day, I have become invalidated by some epidemical malady which Hospital staff state is N. Y. D. The veriest tyro will know this state of things is no earthly joke. I asked to Medical Officer Sir I am totally prepared for violent Demise or decease, so kindly inform me whether, I am dangerous or only serious, that I may indite valedictory notification to friends and lovers, but that jack-in-office became short in temper and would not do so at all until upon my urgently pressing him he replied yes you are dangerous: any moment you may go off like a Chinese Cracker. Pray do not approach too close to any other human entity lest he be implicated in same ruination.

Upon which, entirely cut-up (and who will jeer and sneer at such manly pathoses?) I retired to lines. But Dr. Hatu Ram I.S.M.D., says emphatically that it is all arrant pish-and-tush. He says that "you have, in greed, overloaded your belly with jack-fruit. Bus." This is a devilish malicious falsehood which I should not think of him, as I at that very time, informed to him very sharp. But he was unabashable and continued to repeat same diagnution. Having also some pimples in various localities I think perhaps I have pox (small) or some other variety. I also have some very queasy qualms and damnable aches in Cerebellum, which would perhaps be Cholera morbus Asiaticum.

In all events I am so sick and distempered that in my opinion to be sicker would be a bodily non-possumus. What it is God knows. I shall not write any more this week for fear (partly) to spread infection.

ODE TO EPIDEMICAL DISEASES.

Ah ! one day we, like Roses, so sweetly bloom.
 The next day alas we are in a tomb.
 The doctor may say by my analysis
 You have undoubtedly got a paralysis.
 But if he had even a modicum of gumption
 He would know this is galloping consumption.

Or perhaps he states yes you are very dyspeptic
And all the while that poor fellow is epileptic.
How sad it is that lifes so young and spritely,
May be cut off by dunderheads so awfully lightly,
And when you call them charlatans or quacks
They get into an awful Wax.

P S -I have not mentioned Dr. Hatu Ram in above poem
so he cannot with verisimilitude state that I am maligning him
in a professional manner.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

VI.

Horticultural Dilemmas.

Last week I was distempered by awfully nasty bodily insalubrities. This week these have, thank God, become dissipated, but in place have arrived mental disorders which even more cut me to my quacks. The matter is as follows:—The Mule corps has gone upon a march. Owing to tyrannical hukms of Censor Sahib, I can by no means inform to what place. I, with quarter master daladar, and some menials have remained behind, and on my poor head (Hard Lines) has fallen the confounded Onus of Superintending Corps Garden. The fact is that corps mali (alias gardener) is an utterly roguish loafer, and I have sent urgent memo to inform C. O. accordingly. For not only does he do nothing of the sort of digging and delving, day in and out, but also he with superhuman insolencies is saving and saving to me “Oho babuji, doubtless you are skilled to scratch paper. My work is to scratch ground (*i.e.* earth) I do not come to your daftar, and sav scratch not in this manner, but in another. Do not therefore weary me with similar foolish talks.” Now this is mutinousness, which I have frequently explained to him, for which penalty is Death, or such less punishment as in this Act mentioned, but he solely laughs impudently. It is true that my so many studies have prevented me to learn Botany and Culture (whether *Horti*, *Arbori*, or *Agri*) to full extent. But I am (Great God) no ignoramus in the Domains of Fruitings and Flowerings, and so I told to mali.

I also asked him that “where are those pea-seeds, whom Captain Beresford Sahib ordered you to plant in earth since two months?” He replied “I have placed.” I said “where

then are the off-springs of such seedlings?" He replied "Alas! A ravenous female cat comes nightly, and greedily devours, and although I pursue this feline with determination and grits, she runs awfully swiftly, and leaps over the mud wall at the back of the cooking-houses. So I did not attain her."

Now this is undoubtedly a cock-and-bull, since felines are, rather carnivorous (and piscivorous) and do not by habitude browse upon such grassy vegetables and verdures.

I also inquired to mali "Re pumpkins and *kadoos*, pray inform to me what bandobast you have made in this respect? For I cannot by any means enjoy such fructifications and I have strong desire to eat myself and perhaps quarter master *dafadar* too." He said "Alas, alas, an incredible multitude of worms have arrived by stealths, in that locality and with diligent mastications have entirely chewed each and every one. I myself, by sweaty industry, have killed no less than three lakhs of them. Upon which becoming exhausted, I refrained, for it is clearly the will of Almighty God Who in His Great wisdom has sent them. Against Him, who can strive? Such an act is, in very truth, blasphemous. But you, *babu ji*, being what we call an infidel, cannot understand such Holy 'Things.' Whereat I became rather a Sarcasm, and replied "Re your late statement, that I have killed no less than three lakhs of these verminns, kindly show me worm corpses, so that I shall count." (Now we shall see, I thought, how this damnable false witness will become entirely discomforted.)

But what did that malapert neer-do-weel reply? He said "Sweeper has immediately removed all, and incinerated, in order that bad smells may not accrue in garden. This is a very strong order of the *Sahib's*."

In unbearable umbrage, I replied "What is the name of such sweeper, for I shall interrogate him, as I do not believe one jot."

He said with perkish airs, "I do not hold communication with the sweeper-log and such low class fellows, so I cannot

tell what may be his name. But in appearance he is small and dirty, and is rather like in face to you, babu ji !”

At that, I became utterly passionate (as was natural) and chid him with great gusto explaining fully his shocking and depraved criminalities. Nevertheless he did not become in the least bashful, but rather jocund. So being utterly at patience's end, I at last said with stern tones, “ I order you to go in arrest.”

He replied “ Where to ?”

At that, I became (in heart) rather aghast, since, I was ignoring of pukka procedures. But seeing close by guard room and sentry of the 100th Pathans, I said “ Come.” He did so, and we arrived to guard room. I cried “ Oh, Sentry this fellow is in arrest. Accept him, and bind in handcuffs, etc.” Then that doltish fellow, (sentry) for no earthly cause, began to smirk with vehemence, and replied something unknown in that barbarous tongue of Pushtu. Then the guard Havildar too came, to whom I explained the affair. But to great astonishment he refused with emphatical negations to accept mah. Being at wit's end I said “ But you must of necessity receive him. I order you to do, and if not, you are also in arrest, so beware.”

As I was thus saying a British Officer had supervened close by. Becoming glad, I began to say. “ Sir, I am clerical establishment of Ancient and Honourable Corps of supply and transport, drawing Rs. 50 per mensem without counting field service allowances, when he with roughish mannerisms interrupted saying “ ~~what~~ the devil do you mean by threatening to place this havildar in arrest ?”

So I explained all the shameful matter of the pumpkins and worm-corpses and also the mutinies and insultings of the Mali.

That B. O. then (and this, through incredible, is utterly voracious) chatting to havildar in that man's own vulgar dialect, began to tap his brow, and nod at me with gross significancies, whereat, all present, including that dastardly raff-riff the mah proceeded to laugh with unstinting immoderations. Also

the more urgently did I claim my justice, the more unseemingly did they, each and every, cackle and guffaw to such an extent that a large crowd quickly became collected and all (excepting only myself) made merry with great jocosity.

At last, utterly brow-beaten, I turned aside and went towards mule lines, but after a few yards I heard behind foot falls, and that mali's accursed voice saving "Babu ji there is one more guard room close to the supply depot. Shall we go to that one?"

I turned round, but being so ineffably choleric my tongue became utterly clogged. Meanwhile mali still laughing heartily, absconded in north easterly direction.

However, I have sent wire to O. C. corps as follows.

Sir aaa I have placed into arrest mali aaa on account of I. Gross Neglection of Duty aaa II. Losing by shocking carelessness Government property e. g. pease and kuloos etc. aaa III. Stating eleven falsehoods to Clerk Piche Lal B.A. aaa IV. Violent mutinousnesses aaa V. Awfully impertinent words and acts to clerk Piche Lal B.A. aaa VI. Being found out of temper aaa Please wire instructions at early convenience aaa Piche Lal B.A. aaa.

Now we will see what that beneficent and sage officer Captain J. H. Beresford Esquire, will order. By Indian Army Act that vile criminal (mali) cannot only be shot to death but 3 months pay cut in addition. I myself will not intercede in the least extent.

There is, with many regrets, no other important war news in this district.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

VII.

Mulish Paraclasm.

My heart is full at this era with bitter hypochondriacalities against that illegitimate off-spring of Horse and Donkey, *viz.*, MULE: and concerning him, (or her) and him (or her) *only* will I write this time.

Many items in animals category are awfully nasty, as is well-known to students of History of Nature, such as bugs (bed), flies, (either sand, gad, house, horse, bottle-blue, etc.,) roaches, (cock) and other notorious lepidopterums and animalcules. But in my opinion MULE is worst than all them. Now there are some human men (and ladies too) (doubtless of defective brain-pans) who aver stoutly that MULE is Friend of Man. Personally myself being in first-class Mule Corps I am able to contradict in toto such non-sensical boshes. Not only is MULE mimical (utterly) to human race, but also is one of most damnable geniuses of equine species whom Great God has performed.

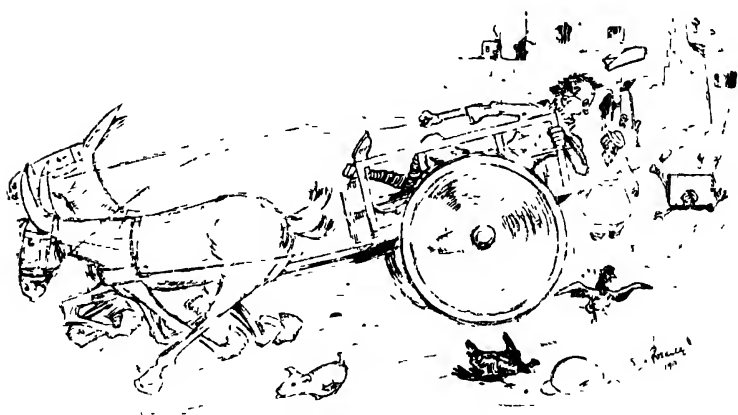
When owing to urgent Sikari business one demands him to run awfully swiftly, sucking through teeth, and chirping in approved muleteerish mannerisms what will he do? He will rear and make bucks. When on the second hand it is most necessary to immediately halt and one ejaculates with unmistakable clarity "Khara Raho, Sur Mal," what will then be his obstinacy of procedure? He will run, either forward or backward, and indeed sideway, at utmost pace which legs can perform, making pretence contemporaneously of crass funkiness. Then he will doubtless begin to prance and dance for the space of one hour (approx.) biting with mouth and kicking with feet and in many other ways

brutally afflicting all spectators far and near. And all this for no fault whomsoever on part of those poor peoples.

Owing to these and similar conducts of this asinine denizen, I am in a pretty kettle of hot waters. The matter is, to speak broadly, as per following. Yesterday having obtained one verbal permission I proceeded to visit city of Basrah seated in mule corps tonga with object of view of conducting some commercial arrangements. The driver (or coachman) of this equipage being an entirely slap-dashy personality, I ordered him with stern peremptorinesses, that you may proceed slowly and with unparalleled vigilancies, to which after some impertinent morosity he agreed to do such. Having a strong desire to purchase some salt (of Mr. Epsom's excellent nostrum) I said, outside the Imperial Emporium, (in vernacular of course) "Stop instanter for here I have business to transact." So that menial fellow (coachman) commenced to forcibly jerk his rein straps, and vociferate gross indecencies to his mulish pair. By means of that, and the help of an Arabian urchin, we were happily enabled without ado to become stock-still at next corner but one. Not wishing to return so far, I said to coachman "Oh coachman, alight and go back swiftly to enquire if, within, such and such commodity is available for payment issue." So thus he did, saying all the same those mules will surely run off if there is only you, babu ji. Just as I was beginning to chide him for this perky demeanour, what did do those thrice accursed jackasses ?? In the very tick of a clock, and without hat I could in least degree click or cluck or clack them to stop or forebear, they had, contrary to very sakht police regulations, burst into a pukka steeple-race of phenomenal velocity down very main street of Bazaar. I (poor fellow) was postjected backside ways with violent bumpings, until I became recumbent on posterior part of carriage in most degraded posture legs being most unnaturally elevated upon seat and head wagging perilously down toward Material Earth. Nevertheless in spite of anguish both bodily, and mentally, I with super-

human intrepidity did not for one whit unlose hold of rein-straps, and indeed if such had been so, I would that every time have straightaway overbalanced in a hindermost parabola upon the High Hard Road (would Heaven this had been such foresooth!)

My Gracious Word! What a Pandemoniacal Cataclysm!!! Rumble Tumble! Clatter Patter!! Both mules braying and crowing with strident cacophones! Dogs and asses and poultries and low class Arabian brats and whipper-snaps hueing and crying behind and before and this and that and indeed everyside too!! Some of the above mentioned in preceding para, both human and beastly were instantaneously inverted bottom upwards and remained behind crying bitterly in a prone position. One of these subvertees was a superannuated coolie-fellow carrying one box of waters (numeral) upon his back and afflicted clearly with intense auricular deafness. I became quite sickly in my heart lest perchance this vehicle



'You should have been more careful.'

may not strike against that so thumping impediment and thereby become utterly somersaulted. But thanks be to Great Almighty, who in his Beneficent Wisdom delivered a contrary hukm, only that coolie-man, and not his great box became passed over. Peering backward rather I enquired loudly to

thus latter that "You should have taken more care. Have you become injured or no? and if so in what anatomical locality?" But the vehicle in which I was voyaging traversed the neighbouring district so awfully swiftly that I did not become aware of his reply (if any) Shortly after above fortunate evasion one fowl (or poultry), becoming doubtless confused, leaped in an upward direction and became lastly embedded between that portion of tonga called technically "Splashing Board," and the wheel on that very side, consequently owing to furious revolutions of latter, he (or she as the case may be for I cannot state with certainty) became in a quick trice denuded of all featherings which being blown backwards gave to me much inconveniency Thus while my oral orifice was (compulsorily) opened in cries to bystanders of Help! Help!! Stop! Stop!! I imbibed (involuntarily of course) very many feathers and (I think) other portions unknown, and became rather asfixiated. Then suddenly, there was a horrisonous Crack-of-Doom and I saw a large motor-car above my head and I became straight away senseless

(Here are to be inserted rows of stars please. About 18 rows will be sufficient)

*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*

When after many hours (I think) my Poor Soul returned to his appointed Clayey Domicilium, and I once again became rather sensible, I got aware that I am lying upon ground with large crowds surrounding. An European doctor is engaged in pinching heartily my left bosom. I said with groanings do not do such things pray, for I am moribund and in great painfulness to boot it. He replied with laughs. You have "bached." No harm done and no bones broken. This I immediately denied with vehement negations, averring that "not only pelvis but tibias and clavicles are smashed to glory worse luck." At which that utterly calous medjco became even more jocular. But at that very moment my sickened eyes rivetted upon

another European, to wit, that Bazar Major-Sergeant whom I have referred already in my Snips and Snaps on occasion of Punctured Ass. He was larger and obeser even than before and of obnoxious mien. He was writing in Note-Book, and saying to a Brit. Off. Standing by, embellished with some red tablets" and other red bands upon sleeves and cap and (I think) trowsers. "Very good, Sir; Driving furiously to the public danger in the Main Street." At which that other ominous official nodded his cranium, and the Obese Fellow wrote with voluminous quill-driving.

The latter then ejaculated "Shall I put an alternative charge, Sir, of Drunkenness on active service when in charge of a Government vehicle?" At which his superior coadjutator replied, "Yes, certainly."

So then that European Major-sergeant enunciated with seniority, "Also, passing through prohibited areas during the hours of daylight." That other again caused his head to wag with stern reiterations.

The Major-sergeant continued with briskness, "Also, causing grievous bodily harm to Abdul Wahid, aged 65, employed at the Soda Water Factory. Secondly to Ali, age and occupation unknown. Thirdly to—er—Mrs—er—Miss" (looking with interrogation towards the red-banded official who made as though he did not hear at all)—"er—Mrs. Nur Clashmi, age and—er—occupation also unknown. Fourthly to others of tender age. In addition causing death by violence to 3 fowl, 1 dog, 1 pack donkey and 2 goats. Also causing by culpable negligence injuries to (a) a Government tonga (b) two mules and (c) the motor-car of the G. O. C., 15th Army Corps." (At this jointure I began to have apprehensive qualminess.)

"In addition contrary to general Routine Orders, not being in possession of either an Identity Disc, a first field dressing, or a pass." He then turned his fat visage in my direction. He said "Have you a pass?" Then all the awful truthfulness burst upon my startled heart. I was this forsaken fellow for

whom these criminous indictments were being prepared. So being utterly flabbergastated I again expired with promptitude.

(Some more stars : about 14 rows will be necessary.)

*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*

An ambulatory Medical bullock wagon transferred my soulless body back to the lines of the Mule Corps, wherein I now lie at the acute point of dissolution. I am also utterly angry against Doctor Hatu Ram (Indian Subordinate Medical Service) who states that having examined my each and every bodily portion he can find injuries to following extent only.

I. Bump or Swelling to trivial extent upon the occiput

II. Slight abrasion of membraneous cuticle in one finger and two thumbs.

III. Ingrowing toe-nails, One.

IV. Some boils.

He also states that if I become deceased by reason of any of above it will be either No. III or No. IV.

Now this is absurd (patently) and I shall report him to A. D. M. S., for unprofessorial conducts. I have also informed him (Hatu Ram) that "I will not converse (amicably at any rate) with you in the immediate future. So beware." At which he has joked excessively.

If I recover which is naturally in Great God's hand (and not at all in those of Sub-Assistant Surgeon Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D.) I shall write more Snips and Snaps. If not I shall not do.

Please receive kind regards.

Yours affectionately,
PICHE LAL, B.A.

VIII.

CHRISTMAS!

Alias Yule or Noel.

Christmas! What a tender memorial and how puffs and swells the heart of each and every natal Britishman when he hears this Divine Name ejaculated! (Christmas!!)

And how, with utterly impatient distraction, he (or indeed she) counts each and each day till this anniversary may again inaugurate itself with holly and mistletoe plants, and the tender turkies, and the luscious plum-pies and mince puddings. Christmas!!!

If permitted by Almighty's *Hukm*, all English peoples return to "Sweet Sweet Home," for this season, and hold junketings and high jinks in the bosoms of their lady wife and callow off-springs. On the evening forestalling the *Bara Din* (Great Day) all those small urchins, boys and girls, etc., are wont to suspend from virgin cot socks and stockings in which that kind Ogre Father Christmas (alias Santa Claus Sahib) shall be enabled to stuff heart-ravishing and jolly nice presents. These articles, at break of glorious morn, the "Baba-Log" (to employ, regretfully, a vulgar vernacularism) seize with shrill and adulatory comments. Oh my Goodness, what a Scamper and Pell-mell! What chitter-chatter and merry prathugs!

Meantime the reverend seniors abscond to English church, and sing with blithesomeness and harmonical taste the gospels, canticles, and other selections engendered in that Holy Publication "The Rubric." Meantime the Right Reverend Pastor chants with fervid heart-out-pourings Hosannahs and Hallelu-

jahas. Then at a suitable opportunity some holy and respectable gentlemen of the audience, perambulating gently to and fro offer red bags to the remainder in which is poured pounds, shillings, pence, and farthings, according to individualistic financial state. Even buttons by those who are utterly stony-broken (*i. e.* bankrupt) are accepted.

After this the elders retire to their own domiciles, where takes place a parade of the domestic menials, one and all. The gardener (or *mali*) or perhaps twain present a doli of flowers and fruitings from his horticultural domain with multifarious salaams and genuflections. Whereat he is suitably and munificently rewarded. And thus with other varlets and scullions, down to even dog-boy and sweeper, who retire "blushing rosy red" with excess of ecstatic feelings at such rich bakhshish. And at the gate of the compound, there teems a legion (at any rate cohort) of mendicants and neer-doweels who sup with great glee all the rice and curry-*bat* and *ghi* and double *roti* and even receive, to boot it, four (or may hap even eight) annas from the august fingers of the Goodwife. Heigho, how they munch and crunch all the niceties! And then when all are thus satisfied and relieved, the Inhabitants of the Domicile hie swiftly to the Xmas feast in order to regale their eager bellies also.

And the while they masticate their nice and lavish nutriment, how do they laud and praise their magnanimous male parent who has so unstintedly provided all this succulence! And what jocundity and pandemonium is there Good Heavens! Blind-Buff-Man and explosions of crackers (a humorous *pyrotechnic*) and dominoes and Find-The-Slipper (or Shoe) and Snow-Balls and other games too numerous to retail. My goodness gracious, how they romp skittishly and gamble! And how content is the grandmother *Sahiba*, doubtless a crone of great age, to watch her progeny's progeny, (and mayhap to boot, progeny's progeny's progeny) gathered there in convivial jocularly! And how vehemently does she raise her cracked voice to egg them to greater excess! Then all are fatigued

and sweaty, perhaps some prudent and spritely dame shall decompose on the piano either sensuous or grandiloquent sonatas as her mood passes; and one and every, large and small, with beaming visages, and bursting hearts, will give vent to mellifluous strains of tasty musics, *viz.*, "Rule Britannia" "Auld Sang Lyne," and other sacred hymns, till the rafters ring (and perhaps welkin too). Such is Xmastide in Happy, British Hearth and Home.

But here - -Alackalass! are no such going-ons. No so nice joys are available to us brave soldierv who sit undauntlessly, day in and out, peering at savage enemy, midst shells and shots and bombings and minings, careless of Ought but how shall we preserve in violet Honour of British Empirical Dominions (to Death itself surely) Hurragh! Hurragh!!

On Yule-Tides Eve, I observed Captam Beresford (O. C. Mule Corps) who appeared sad and hypochondriac to ultimate degree. I said in my heart suddenly, He is homesickly poor fellow. I shall concoct for him a plum-pie whereby his heart shall become filled with jollity and his abdomen ditto, ditto with nutriments. (Possibly also he may recommend me for accelerated promotion for so doing. God knows.)

On going out, I was accosted by that viper Sergeant Higgins who (even he) clearly mollified by Supreme Sanctity of diem. He said "Oh Learned Batchelor of Arts, wilt deign to quaff a bumper with me? Rum (at least it's called that on the waybill) and chlorinated Tigris? Speak, fair my sir, and put me out of my suspense."

So I did so, contrary (entirely) to habitudes, and shortly communicated to him my fixed intention re Captain Beresford and the plum pie.

He said (being to obvious degree touched to utmost entrails) "Piche Lal, Yours is a Beautiful and Sublime Thought. I—éven I"—(he smote own bosom vigorously) "shall assist you."

And then he informed me much old lore anent plum-pies of which I was hitherto nescient.

To wit, that there are 2 main varieties :—

(a) Sweet.

(b) Savoury.

(a) is a common and vulgar specimen not at all appreciable by such a notorious gastronomer as Captain Beresford. He also informed to me that his (Sergeant Higgins') maternal grandam has made the savoury plum-pie for the Coronation of Queen Victoria the Good, and that late August and Glorious Monarchess had stated to Mr. Gladstone, M.P., "I have never tasted any-thing like this pie, and I vehemently doubt lest I may not do so in all future life."

Sergeant Higgins also stated that all those ingredients are not available (even on payment issue) in this district, but that I will adjust Recipe accordingly.

After much brain-wrackings and agitations the Menu was fixed as per seq.

Pies, Plum, Officers pattern, (as per grandmotherly perscription, *vide* above) 1.

Article.	Amount.	Remarks.
Flour . .	1 lb. 11 oz.	Atta employed in lieu. \
Butter .	1 lb. 11 oz.	Ghi employed in lieu.
Sheep Fat	1 lb. 11 oz.	Goat-Fat employed in lieu.
Sauce, Anchovy .	2 Aluminium egg-cups full.	Provided by Sergeant Higgins.
Nutmegs a n d cloves.	2 oz. 1 dram (Troy weight).	Turmeric and chillies employed in lieu procured from Indian rations.
Thyme Rosemary and Rue.	Some sprigs.	Not available, but Sergeant Higgins by great trouble plucked some rare herbs which he stated were even more succulent. Thank God.

All to be mingled with vim, and stewed in cloth bag for 1 hour and 26 minutes.

I myself was not so sure that above will be nice and tasty or no, but Sergeant Higgins took oath on Honour of Defunct Female Grand-parent that if Captain Beresford did not go in fits over it he (Sergeant Higgins) would eat his (Sergeant Higgins') own new Balaclava helmet, and Damn the Expenses. He said also that we must drink Health of Pic. which, again contrary to habitudes, I did so. After that we both laughed heartily for some time.

Sergeant Higgins then said " But what about the Christmas Card ? "

I said " What one ? "

He said " Oh, you must send a Christmas card if you send a present. That's Etiquette."

I said, " But where shall I procure in such a lonely region?"

He said " That's all right I have one, sent to me by The Archbishop of Canterbury. I will give it with joy." (Re that Eminent Divine I did not believe, but said nothing at all.) So then he showed me, and indeed, it was a sublime species of artistry, for on it were painted with admirable verisimilitude :—

- (i) One large plum-pie with frostings all over.
- (ii) Seated on above pie one red-bosom small-bird (perhaps robbin) with holly sprig in mouth.
- (iii) Above in starry firmament two whitish pigeons and some nude babies (clearly of male sex) with wings flew forwards and backwards.
- (iv) Underneath in the sea, were two human hands holding a flag of Union Jack Variety with patriotical motto " Hands Across the Seas, Boys ! " (The boys being perhaps those already referred to in para. 3.)

So having thanked Sergeant Higgins with some well-chosen verbiage, I returned to make bandobast re cooking. While so doing, one orderly cook (a low-class Mahomedan fellow) watching said " There is too much fat."

I replied with pardonable acrimony " What, pray, knowledge have you re confection of plum-pies ? Zero probably. Return

instantly from this cooking house and busy yourself in washing pots and blacking boots. This perhaps you can do, though moderately."

So he did so, though not without impudent sayings.

In the end all was happily consummated, and at 7 p.m. 24-12-16 I withdrew smoking bag and together with Christmas Card handed to Abdul Aziz, bearer to Captain Beresford, having



"A little Token for Yule-tide banquet of our beneficent Captain."

previously attached a label "A little Token for Yule-Tide banquet of Our beneficent Captam. hoping to be nice and toothsome."

Thereupon, I retired away feeling rather bashful lest Captain Beresford may too much thank and compliment me.

Later on Abdul Aziz stated that the Captain Sahib has been

twice ill (abnormally so) so perhaps he will not eat this night but preserve for more suspicious occasion.

The war in this Sphere is, proceeding well. I think (and so does Doctor Hatu-Ram, I.S.M.D.) that we have the situation well in hands. Undoubtedly the Strategetical Preponderance is entirely on side of Allies, but what our tic-tacs will be is of course very much in camera. (*i. e* sub rosa). In any case your readers need not suffer any irksome apprehensivenesses, but may sleep peaceably in their own bedsteads.

Yours affectionately.

PICHE LAL, B.A

IX.

The Front !

My Dear Sir,

This one will treat of "The Front" at which place I am now stationed. I may say this, that we are in touch with the foeman, but I do not think this will continue long time. Beyond this I cannot with exactitude impart our plan of warfare, since Censorious Dept., are very "touchy" on this. But I have no doubt that next Wednesday morning I shall be able to give you such extraordinary bulletines as will make water all the mouths of your fellow-editors with bitter envy. Kindly keep 4 pages (stoppress). Your civilian perusers will doubtless be glad to read unbiased report of pukka battlefield and I will now do my utmost to oblige such inquisitivenesses.

Our place of residence is called P1, P2, P (by the staff authorities) but Captain Beresford calls it something different which I have forgotten though, rather humourous. He also states that, vide map, either the Staff Department are wrong or (which is more likely) the ground is wrong. In either case he says that we personally are bound to be wrong and we shall be tail-twisted sooner or later (probably the former).

We are exposed to innumerable perils both of shells and shots and bombs and sharpnels but we are utterly undauntless and don't care even one scrap. For instance I myself have frequently (entirely reckless of personal body) adopted a seated posture upon a vicinitary mound in order to reconnoissance the savage enemy by means of spyglass. Thereby gleening invaluable "khabar" which I have imported gleefully to Captain Beresford who has thanked me with appropriate eulogistic economiums.

Even that fellow Sergeant Higgins (who I do not deny is at ordinary occasions an inexceptionable dolt) cannot dare to sneer me in this rather heroical task for fear Captain Beresford may not elud him (perhaps).

Indeed once he came when I was thus espying hostile depositions and in coy. with him was an individual called Bombarder Gummidge, R.F.A. (a jocular man but bucolical)

Sergeant Higgins said with much pleasantry and amicalty "We have come to hear your opinion on the situation. Mr. Piche Lal, my friend here, has heard a lot about you, and he is anxious to compare his views with your own."

I said, laughing modestly, "Oh Pooh Pooh! Do not say so I am no Delphic Oracle, Good Heavens! Perhaps my acumen is rather sharpish. But I assure each and either of you both, that it is simply Mother-wits and Lucid logics. That and a cursory study in tactics."

Bombarder Gummidge laughed heartily, and Sergeant Higgins shook his head and I heard him whispering: "He is lost back here. He ought to be an Observing Officer. *Nothing* escape him! *Marvellous*!"

Who can foresooth wonder that hearing this unstinted praise, I became entirely a cockahoop, though I made as though I have heard nothing in the least!

Then I, (still continuing to surreptitiously eavesdrop) heard Bombarder Gummidge enunciate "Do you think he would give us a hand one of these days? . . . It would be a great help. . . . Might mean the turn of the battle. . . . (I meantime whistling without care, and scanning at horizon with spy-glass). So at last after some even more highly flattering statements re self (*i. e.* Piche Lal) Sergeant Higgins said aloud to me. "Bombarder Gummidge says that the Artillery Commander would be more than pleased if you would act as Forward observer for him. Only occasionally of course, when you can get leave. It would be a great help owing to shortage in experienced men."

I said with great astonishment, "But, my dear Sir, do you conceive that a pure babu like I should be able to fulfil such military espionnages. Also what clothes shall I don, and hat also?"

Then they informed to me that you will not be pukka spy (God forbid such) but you will merely peep out from holes and cracks, and crannys to ascertain what knavish tricks enemy is contriving, and inform same by means of telephone.

So in the end, but after declaiming often and often that I do not certainly think I am worthy of such High Technology I said "Righto I will do."

So both proceeded to congratulate me cordially, and Bombarder Gummudge said "you will find there is very little danger, and if things get hot, you can always get under shelter."

I said "Danger? Faugh! When serving King-Emperor and Country that is a mere tut-tut. Besides I am strongly addicted to Danger of all types. Believe me, I am not a white feather, come what will and may."

He said he could see that much from my deportment and manly visage.

So it was all arranged for succeeding afternoon, as soon as I had prepared Army Form B 213 and Bombarder Gummudge after shaking hands with great familiarity proceeded to go away.

When mounting upon horse, I heard him saying "That's the sort of man we want." (clearly signifying me).

To which Sergeant Higgins replied, sadly nodding. "I wish I had his brains. He's a wonder" (equally clearly signifying me).

So I went backwards to office, with highly elated heart, singing sweetly, while walking, some nice songs and snatchings, until asked by some perky low-class private soldier "where I am wounded? Also does it hurt awfully? Thirdly may I have honour to apply first field dressing?" With great *infra dig* I

replied not one word but continued to walk and sing as before (*vide* 1st part of para).

The next day I made all preparations in early time. I informed to Captain Beresford that "Sir kindly please give me leave of absence on urgent private affairs," which that beneficial officer assented strataway (How he little thought it!!)

Re dresses and equipments I lent the following items from Sergeant Higgins and Bombarder Gummidge, as being adaptable for such temerarious adventures.

Hats "Smasher" Mexican pattern ..	..	..	1
Pistols, Revolver with bandoliers ..	..	..	2
Scopes, peri, folding, safety ..	..	..	1
Knives, clasp, Sailors' with swivel ..	..	..	1
Axes, pick, with helves ashen ..	..	..	1

Also in haversack some emergency rations and barbed wire.

We marched out of camp at 3-21 p.m. Bombarder Gummidge firstly, carrying telephone, I secondly, and Sergeant Higgins thirdly. I strode along with such agile and gymnastic footsteps, that both others could not find words to praise my nimblity, praying me vehemently, Go easily Piche Lal, go easily, which of course, I did laughably.

At last we arrived to a petty nullah, where Bombarder Gummidge alternatively raising hand upwards, and then placing to lips, in token of drastic cautions, was creeping forward in a serpentine manner, and we remaining 2, were following in a similar wormish fashion. Presently there appeared a wooden ladder on right side of nullah.

Bombarder Gummidge halted and placed telephone on ground joining it to some wires there. Then taking periscope as before detailed he proceeded to ascend up ladder until almost the summit when with superhuman scrupulosity raised periscope and remained squinting.

His face became fearful.

He descended from ladder.

I said "What have you seen? Is the enemy there?" He said "Not a word on your life. 2,000 men and 18 guns, as far as I could calculate and not more than 60 yards off."

Inwardly I was feeling rather bilious, but I said with great bravery "If so many, then all the easier to hit them." fingering revolver-pistol. But both he and Sergeant Higgins silently seized me and imprecated me that I will think of our lives as well as your own. So at that what could man whomsoever courageous do? (Nothing indeed).

I said "If you do not recommend offensive acts what then do you?"



"I wriggled periscope."

He said "If you will stay here to observe, I will return and warn Artillery Commander. But on no account protude cranium or indeed any anatomy above bank. Sergeant Higgins can help you."

I said "Good. Very Good. Instructions noted and will be complied with in due course."

When he had gone, without waiting one instant I began to ascend ladder humming tunes though Sergeant Higgins begged "Please be circumspect and also silent."

I reached near to the top and wriggled periscope as I had seen Bombarder Gummidge performing, but owing doubtless to gross defect of that damnable organ I could not see in mirror anything in the least, but one smasher hat, and one human face (clearly both belonging to myself).

Sergeant Higgins then said "What's happening? Can you see them?"

Not wishing to reply a non possumus I answered in guile as though counting "Sixteen—seventeen—eighteen—yes—nineteen—undoubtedly nineteen. Bombarder Gummidge is wrong. Nineteen guns and all facing this direction"

He said many times "Gorblimey," "Gorblimey," or some similar religious formula.

I descended from ladder saying I shall notify Artillery Commander. So "ringing up" (as previously instructed to me) I said Hullo, Hullo, Hurry, Hurry, I wish to have connection with Artillery Commander. Hurry Hurry— "A stern voice said "I am Artillery Commander. What is it?"

I said, "Sir, excuse troubling, but there are not 18 guns as reported mendaciously by Bombarder Gummidge, but 19. No more developings just now."

That voice said "Good. You have done well. Very well. Report further action."

I replied, certainly General you may rely me Sir, I am Piche Lal, B.A. Clerk in S. and T. Corps, but hoping for advancements.

He said "I have heard of you, you will get such." Needless to say, I was entirely agog with glee, and turning to Sergeant Higgins, who was standing there utterly dumfounded at such familiar chit-chat with so highly-placed nobles, said with pleasant oracularity "Now we shall see what we shall see"

As I was about to be re-scaling that ladder Sergeant Higgins seized me with both hands and again begged me that "Please be so careful since your life is precious to all us also."

I said My life is a mere pawn, and is in hands of The Great Pawnbroker (pointing aloftwards)

So he said "yes, yes, you are right. I am now going to guard your left flank for I fear circumvallation."

I said "Do so please" and I proceeded to ascend again (intrepidly) Ladder of Observatory while he ran off swiftly.

I had, regained 3. 4. "flights" when suddenly came *most frightful* BANG- BANG one in my left side and other in my right, and I fell to groundward with a shocking cropper, whereon the ladder fell upon me recumbent in five places, and also I was pricked excruciatingly by barbed wire in haversack. I was utterly squashed-out at first I said "This is the End. I am dissoluted worse luck." But happily courage returned and throwing aside ladder like straw I began to run ahead with unparalleled alacrity oblivious of sweats and breathings, and pricks and prods. And in the end, I arrived at the Mule Corps Lines and fell down at the door of the Hospital Tent and soon Dr. Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., came and began to feel me. There was one mystery in the affair. Two explosions had clearly taken place one in each pocket of my coat warm, British, as was obviously indicated by the Singeing of the pockets and some remains in shape of blackish card-board and burnt strings. In my opinion they were dropped from either aeroplane or airship. But this was extraordinary fortune that to me accrued not a weal or a woe!

That obstinate "crochet" Dr. Hatu Ram keep saying and saying "Those are squibs" (*i.e.* puerile pyrotechnics) and you

are a big fool," but I do not argue with him. I merely say "What pray do you know of modern Warfares? Nil practically." Even then he does not stop but chuckles apishly.

I shall shortly go to Artillery Commander and explain situation.

However to us at the Front such occurrences as above are quite diurnal events.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

X.

Some Strategetical Innuendos.

May be possibly (or no) some of your (lay) readers have perused (with cracking brain) those highly military Rigmaroles of that gifted penman Mr. Hilaire Bottomly Esquire. I consider them to be very commendible, and am myself in concordance with them to good extent. But I need not point out that a stay-at-home critical civilian is one thing, and a military "Man-at-the-Spot" is somebody else.

I will therefore give for the benefit of your lay readers, above said, a Terse Eptitome re the status quo in this Oriental Campaign, and then I shall for benefit of Highest Command, and indeed Nation-at-large, propose a Bellicose Strategy. Attached please find one Map or Atlas, clearly delineating Battlefield and neighbouring districts. I beg to strongly request to all readers *to tear into peeces this atlas and burn (after perusal)* for fear that underhanded emissaries and spymen may not despatch secretly to Certain Quarters! and these fellows, believe me, are almost ubiquitous (even in India).

In any case after a stare or two and a short cogitation, even a blockhead will comprehend all that is necessary, in 2 or 3 trices. To return to War, it must be noted that most Military Forces commonly have one or more "Objectives." What then, you will doubtless ask, is (or are) our objective (or objectives) if any. This I will inform you in a nutshell.

Primarily (or preliminarily) Capture of Kut.

Secondarily (or continuatorily) do. of Baghdad

Tertiarily (or consuminatorily) do. of Constantinople, and Balkan Nations generally.

Beyond this I shall neither prognosticate nor hypothecate.

You will then say "How then, Oh learned Babu ji, can we perform such schedules?" This also I will now answer.

We must manœuvre in a stealthy and circumambient fashion. We must employ Guiliness and Hypocriticalities, we must apply "the poison of the Serpent and the wisdom of the Dove."

I shall now unfold my Plan which is rather resembling Mr. Hilaire Bottomly's notorious "Pincers" Strategy, but better in every way.

Firstly divide up Army into 2 bits. Bit No. 1 to include all European persons, and Bit No. 2 all Indian do. Bit No. 1 to go to the left *via* Arabia and Sacred Land, and Bit No. 2 to the right *via* India, Tibet, etc.

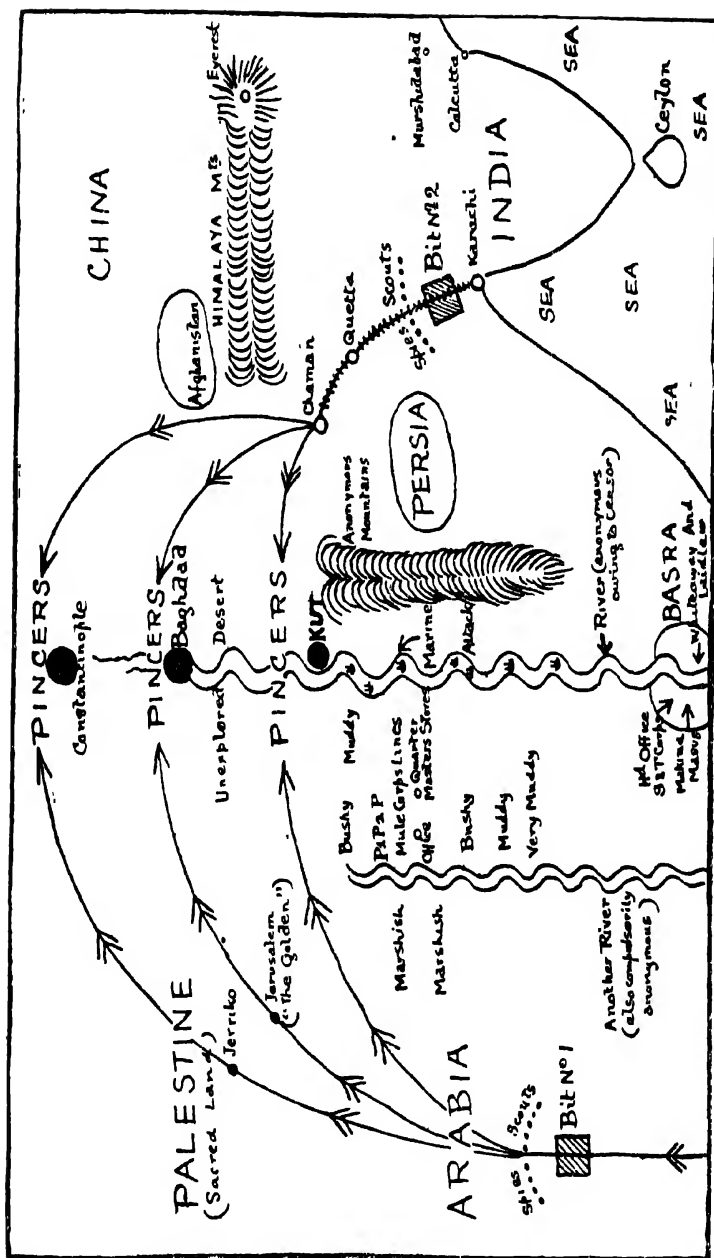
Then they will meet in the middle, and attack Turks in (as we say technically) a harrage (*i.e.* ambush). Contemporaneously the Marine Department to make an enfilade movement.

Ah! ahah! you will cry. What a stunning plan! Tip-top, Good Heavens! Prime! Bravo! Huzzar! Encore! (and indeed other interjections according to Nationality). But postpone please, good peoples, these eulogious acclamations, and continue reading with application.

In the first place, this plan is indubitably a *Surprising One*, and "Surprise" as a very famous general called Napoleon was wont to ejaculate "is the First Fundament of Success."

Secondly, though a very audacious plan, is not in the least rash, all steps even the most pettifogging having been excogitated to the bottom, by Author in consultation with some other military wiseacres. Indeed it is a Grand and Monstrous Plan and no mere Humbuggy Fidlestick, as will be clearly seen.

How let us come to Ways and Means (*i.e.*, Transport and Supply) taking Bit No. 2 firstly. What do we see? A great Railway North-Western from Karachi *via* Jacobabad, Sibi, Quetta, etc., to Chaman! Beyond that, to reveal our methods of progression would merely be senseless indiscretion, and would surely get up Chief Censor's back. So, I merely say "Leave that in our hands and don't fuss." Meantime give all Indian



Atlas of Oriental Campaign drawn entirely by eyesight by Author showing ticiacs strongly recommended.

ranked two months leave on return to their so-loved Peninsular, and free tickets to Hearths and Homes. Also Rs. 3 as. 8 per diem detention allowance to all superior establishments, and, if they are itching to become married, Rs. 300 as "bridal portion" and Rs. 100 per male-offspring as bonus (if such occurs in due course) and Rs. 5 per female do. I think that this encouragement to human parturition is utterly necessary to fill up some of the casualties in this Awfully Maleficent War. On this point I beg to invite correspondence, though of serious nature only. If otherwise, I shall not only ignore totally, but report same to Q. M. G. in India.

To turn to the other force (Bit No. 1) what a Rosy Vista is unfolded forsooth!

Being rather nescient on the matter of Arabic railways, I proceeded to interrogate Captain Beresford. He said "Arabic railways? You are not thinking of investing money in them are you?" I replied in the negative, adding somewhat sapiently "Only I am seeking Knowledge for 'Knowledge is Power.'"

He said "Ah yes Quite So. Exactly." So then he began to pander to my curiosities. The gist is this that what Railways there are, are good, but station masters and ticket collectors rotten.

If you seek a ticket, you must previously, (before he will listen to you even) pay station master Rs. 3 bakhshish. Also as. 12 to all ticket collectors. or else they will not punch you.

Now this is a utterly exorbitant fee. What we should do is to place in close arrest all such officials on a charge of:—

- (1) Blackmails.
- (2) Impudency.
- (3) Refusing to issue (or punch) tickets for an officer, hospital nursing sister, langri, mistri, general, soldier, etc., of the Regular Forces.

I think after some Field Imprisonment No. 1 these perkish jacks-in-office will not only do so with excessive alacrity but even themselves pay that voyagers come and draw tickets gratis.

In fact I am certain. Re supplies, Captain Beresford was hesitating but said "at any rate dates and wild-ass-meat is available." Sergeant Higgins states on the other hand, that, Arabia is notable for innumerable tasty dishes, *viz.*, Pies, pork, puddings blood, Mecca muffins, Medina Macaroons, and a sweet liquor called Shekh Omar's Benedictine. However I would caution readers that this N. C. O. is not averse to fibs of most virulent type, so I cannot confirm. For my part I thought of gum, Arabic, (for Office use). Also can be chewed and masticated if necessary.

But when we enter "Promised Land" then indeed will those lucky fellows (Brit No. 1) fare succulently (both in mastication and bibition) and at not even one penny cost to Government.

Firstly, as every school-urchin knows, it is a "land flowing with milk and also honey." The milk (of course) will be in lieu of the present tinned milk ration (2 oz. when available but this is unfrequent). The honey I would humbly suggest vice jam ration (3 oz. per diem). For salt, there is unlimited stock in Dead Sea. And when this is exhausted Captain Beresford says "We can always tap Lot's wife provided there are no local byelaws forbidding this practice." (This is beyond my Holy Scriptural Studies but doubtless intelligent to Christian readers.) There are also olives, a whole mount of them, and Captain Beresford suggests vice mustard ration at $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. per fighting man and $\frac{7}{8}$ oz. per follower. I concur heartily.

Vice meat ration there are said to be conies, (a petty rodent) fattened calves, Behemoths and Leviathans. The latter are pachydermatous quadrupeds, of such incredible bigness that one is the correct ration for the Infantry Brigade for 4 days! Also locusts (a fattish grass-hopper) which I suggest vice bacon (3 oz.) Re fodder, Captain Beresford said "well, Nebuchadnezzar used to eat grass in large quantities almost a maund at a time if I remember rightly. Sure to be some left." Re barley and corns, he says "Yes" but is doubting concerning prices

He says " One homer (*i.e.*, $7\frac{1}{4}$ ephahs) costs 10 Shekels at nerrick rates, but what the present rate of exchange is I don't know."

Vice potato ration, he could not say, but I pointed out to him that Jerusalem artichokes were clearly indicated. To which he agreed emphatically.

Lastly for bibulous purposes, you can brew some nice tea from juniper-berrys and not only that but when these have become rotten a luscious beer (or ale) is produced which can be drunk vice rum ration ("2 oz. as ordered by Divisional Commander, but to be drunk on that very spot in presence of two officers and in no case after 4 p.m. usual certificate being furnished in triplicate.")

PICHE LAL, B.A.

XI.

A Huntsman in Araby.

Now a civil ignoramus (or if of effeminate gender) ignoramus may doubtless evince astoundment that we rough and bluff warriors like to spare some leisure hours from our so-loved military curriculum for such a thing as Hunting Proclivities. But indeed it is a Passion with us. Of course such a thing is quite *contra vires* when in contact with enemy and would be (with justice) severely frowned by G. O. C. In my dear, dear, (and sweet) Homeland of Hindustan we call this Shikar and it is without any doubt a jolly nice sport. What more could a would-be Nimrod (or Diana?!) wish beyond let us say one fierish and fleet-footed nag or tat to scamper and bound along on the boundless plains while he chaces indigenious floras and faunas of each and every description with guns and other suitable armours, until he has attained the quarry (or quarries) and may gaze with suffused eyes and swelling heart-strings upon the visible insignia of his skill, returning nightly to his boon comrades so as to vaunt and sing about his venatorial feats for a long time! For this country is a veritable "Sporting Paradise" and there are abundance of games, both vertebrates and invertebrates, mammals and unmammals.

Among the latter we will find birds of all sorts. These may be divided into Eatable Birds and Incatable Birds. With these latter we will not have any connection for (apart from British soldier-log) only sweepers, chamars, and other similar low-class dirty fellows will eat in the least such as, *e.g.*, kites, vultures, bats, ravens, eagles, and other predaceous aerial fowls.

So let us turn to the Eatable Ones which are usually categorized into (a) Terrestrial (b) Aqueous. Of these there are

many Specieses, *i.e.*, Storks are very ubiquitous and may be espied standing on one of their two existent legs in marshy districts, ever watchful to prod and prick with their sharp bills any snails, toads, tad-poles, newts, vipers, and other petty watery denizens and lepidopterums. But you must approach to them with careful cautions, and in a serpentine or creepy manner, otherwise they will, having sqwawked, so as to admonish their neighbouring kiths and kins, flee away o'er hill and dale. On the other hand, if the huntsman be agile and rather acribatical, he may shoot it with a gun, for it is almost impossible to snare it owing to its highly wary cunning. Then there is Rejoicing and Jubilee in the camp as you may well guess.

But this is not so easy as you think, for there are innumerable knotty moot-points to be settled in the twinkle of an eye, such as "whence blows the wind, so that he shall not sniff me and become terrified?" "Shall I take aim for his head, or his rump, or his point of the shoulder" (a favourite goal or target with us sportmen)? "Shall I utilize a 'shot' cartridge or a 'bullet' cartridge," for there are both kinds. By Etiquette of sport "shot" cartridges should usually be employed for birds, though I do not of course insist that if uncommonly large and stout birds are encountered one must never employ bullets such as astridges, dodos, great awks, etc. Secondly, if the "Range" is long one (anything let us say over 300 yards) bullets may be used for they have a radius of almost incredible longitude, indeed as far (or even further) as 2 or 3 miles. The shot having sped on its way, the sportman should advance in the same direction at the military double-march, for his prey may be only fainted or indeed merely malingering, and arise after some moments and scuttle away, which is apt to engender much acerbity, of course. But better than this and far less tiresome is to drill and coach some fast dog (or rather hound) to run and snatch in his jaws such moribund animal bird or reptile, as case may be, without masticating it in the least for

his own appetite, as is common canine custom, and to relate it scatheless to the hunter. Of course this is difficult and requires many years of arduous carefulness, but is highly commendable if time is no object.

You may perhaps wonder why I recently wrote (please see preceding para) "Dog or rather Hound." Now this is a matter of sporting slangs or Nomenclatures, and should be carefully noted by the civilian layman (or laywoman). No *pukka* sportsman will under any circumstances mention the word "Dog." This is assumed to be derogatory and he is therefore dubbed a "Hound." Also you should not talk of his, 'tail!' but his "brush." Similarly he should not be said to "bark" but "bay," etc., etc. Furthermore numerals are never stated in a direct manner, such as 21, 28, but as 10½ Braces or 14 Braces, the rule being divide No. reqd. by 2, adding ½ if necessary. Then there are a very complete list of collective nouns. *E.g.*, the thoughtless tyro might ejaculate "Oho! behold that *flock* of geese," thereby proving himself a Consummate Duffer in Sports. What he should say is, "Oho! behold that *gaggle* of geese," or more technically still "Mark over! A gaggle!" Then again if rejoicing in a little knowledge (which is by the proverb a dangerous thing) he may say, "Oho here is a *gaggle* of snipes," thereby again proving himself a Consummate Duffer in Sports for he should say "a whisk of snipes." Indeed, there are innumerable pit-falls, and truly fools rush where angels fear to tread (Quotation).

The originality of all these sportive Dictions is very obscure but probably dating from Norman Era, so Captain Beresford says, some being quite obvious, such as brace (or trowser suspender) being clearly in two portions, and therefore pair. But a popular Essay addressed to the Vulgar Herds cannot aptly touch on such abstrusities.

So let us turn to Carnivorous Brutes. Of course we have a large quantity of jackals in this neighbourhood (T. 31 C.) and they may be heard yelling and bellowing nocturnally. Do. Do.

for wolfs but even more so. Hyenas and leopards are not so common, and elephants, lions, and tigers are comparatively scarce though Rumour tells that one lion was utterly killed near Kalat-al-Mufti in a rather unparalleled manner, *viz.*, that the acting Sanitary Corporal of the Welch Pioneers who was promenading near the Refilling Point on Sunday was leaped upon by a ferocious lion who attempted to bite him in two, but bit instead one Mill's Hand Grenade Mk. VIII, which happened by chance to be in his pocket, and exploded wounding him in 21 spots though the man was not hurt except a sprained thumb. Now of the two narrators of this incident one was Q. M Sergeant Higgins S. and T. Corps, and as I have often been compelled to point out he is a notorious tittle-tattle, and gullible to a high degree, swallowing all sorts of scenseless gossips. So I have only accepted it provisionally until proved erroneous. To show what a liar is above N. C. O. he first stated that said lion was requisitioned by Senior Supply Officer and issued to units under pseudonym of fresh veal. Being intimately acquainted with S. S. O. who is a very high-minded officer. I refused formally to give credence to such a fabulous libell, and in the end Sergeant Higgins acknowledged bashfully that he was only cracking idle jokes *re* this point, and the fact was fully and subsequently corroborated by Supply Agent Gopal Dass who averred to me with all emphasis (and offered to state in writing if need be) that no fresh flesh whether leonine or no had been issued since 5 days only tinned. So that hubble was pricked pretty quick by some common sense on my part.

Now with regard to pigs, I do not wish to start any religious *jagras* or disputations with my Mussulman friends to whom this species of Mammal is a highly disgusting object. I will merely treat it from a sportive attitude neither praising nor blaming.

Now the *bandobast* for pig-hunting among European sportmen is so funny that I shall fully describe it. An unspecified number of hunters will gather together riding on horses, and carrying no

guns but sharp, long, spears, each and every. With these they purpose to pierce into the body of a pig and cause its early demise. Also some hounds called boar hounds should be collected. When all is ready the Senior Officer (usually called the "Master" and treated with great deference) will wind his horn and gallop slap! dash! into the jungle followed by other members of the "Pack" in order of seniority. There they await the arrival of the pigs in deep silence. When these appear the Master will give a cautionary word of command to his lieutenant such as "Yoicks." The latter should say "Tallyho" or "Soho" or some other suitable phrase, and then the Master will again wind his horn, upon which all spontaneously emitting loud Hurraghs! Huzzahs! and other joyful peons, etc., will scuttle gleefully away after the pigs and try to prod them in a mortal manner. If this cannot be effected, the Master will cry "Halt" and then will "make a new cast" (a technical term). But if so, then that hunter who has firstly pricked the pig is by common consent allotted the "brush" (*vide* above) and the "mask", *i.e.*, face, the remainder taking such portions as have been prodded by each and each respectably. As a general rule feminine pigs technically termed "Sows" and their piglets (called a "Farrow") should not be attacked unless they themselves may be the aggressors. So it is only the grown-up masculines termed "Boars" which are left and he is a very fearful quarry, for besides biting and kicking in the usual manner he is credibly affirmed to have one or more "tusks" wherewith he may deal a ripping blow to some luckless wight, who is inevitably killed *ipso facto*. It is needless to demonstrate that this is not only a highly accidental undertaking but very difficult to become proficient. If this be doubted pray yourself, seize one long spear (about 20 or 25 feet) and seek to prod with accuracy one motionless or quiescent target such as a door. It is not so easy. Then do same thing while running along pretty sharp. Then mount upon a horse with sharp spurs and "lance in rest" and do it again. I shall be surprised if you will hit it. But

the pig is not quiescent, in fact very mobile and highly eccentric in its motions to boot. But what is Danger to us? Speaking for myself (without boastfulness) I may say that it formerly was for me a luxury, but now has become a necessity, and the more Dangerous it is, the better say I. The Staff Captain to C. R. E. has invited me to partake in a hunt with the pigstick next Thursday and I am looking forward with great gusto. My goodness, what fine fun—I must hope, however, that I shall not be unluckily sick with Pancreatic Pachycholia, for to this I have been recently a Martyr. At least Dr. Hatu Ram says so, but I myself diagnose it as much more serious.

The war is progressing very well, and I myself feel very sanguine. I may say without breaking any confidence that our policy is now one of *Attrition*. I am rather doubtful if I ought to publish this or not but doubtless H. E. the Censor-in-Chief will erase if considered necessary for the Defence of the Realm. The *ghi* we have been receiving lately has not been very tasty. We do not complain (of course), but I think a Question (and presumably Answer) in The House would be advantageous to the consumer. I myself do not now eat it at all, so cannot be accused of self-seeking opportunism.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

XII.

The Dogs of War (a Prosy Epick).

Mr. Piche Lal has asked me to write a few words by way of preface to this number of his notable series. Deeply flattered as I am by the proposal, I yet realise the impossibility of any formal appreciation on my part. "All true masterpieces of Art are, ipso facto, incapable of analysis" Thus writes one of the great critics of the last century. There is no truer saying. Supreme genius cannot be X-rayed or vivisected like a garden frog. It cannot be reduced to a rigid and frigid—algebraical formula. It may be likened to some rare jewel, opalescent, myriad-faceted, elusive, inconstant; iridescent with all the hues of those far-distant hills of Hungary which gave it birth. As varies the standpoint of the observer, so will vary his impressums and his emotions. What, I wonder will yours be when you read "The Dogs of War"? I cannot guess. I cannot even tabulate my own sensations.

It may be that you will once more see Troy city blazing and hear, amidst the clang of arms, the groans of dying Hector. It may be that before your eyes will rise a vision of high-prowed ships gay with emblazoned shields, grounding on the sand of the sheltered cove, and the hordes of fierce bearded men leaping into the foaming shallows, and the race across the beach towards the low bluffs. And then you will hear the strangled gasp of the watchman, and the Berserker war cry, and the crash of the battle-axe as it shears through the winged helmet. It may be—but enough. The whole gamut of human emotion is embodied, crystallised, concentrated in the narrow compass of Mr. Piche Lal's deathless prose poem.

I should not care to say how many times I have read "The Dogs of War." To add that I have never come across anything like it would be the merest platitude. I pray that for my own peace of mind I never shall.

J. H. BERESFORD, Captain.

7 such dogs (as mentioned in title) sit inside a bloody dug-out ! For benefit of civil populations who wont to become entirely at wits end at such technical etymologies, I will explain that a dug-out may be either :—

- (1) Any senior officer of decrepit body and senile demeanourisms who has retired from Army some decades before.
- (2) Very small boat or canoe.
- (3) Deep hole in the earth.

Now a knowing fellow may say clearly in this case No. 1 cannot suit context, and canoe is too small, doubtless, for 7 contemporaneously, so must be Hole. He (or she) will be correct. It is Hole. And in it, in a reclining posture as already affirmed, are 7 Dogs of War. The knowing reader will again guess perhaps these are not real canines but only human men. This also is correct. They are British soldiers, iz :—

Bde. Sergeant-Majors	..	..	..	..	..	1
Acting Quarter-Master-Sergeants	..	..	..	..	..	1
Corporal Rough-Riders	..	..	..	..	..	1
Telephonists (in slangy talk "buzzers")	..	..	..	..	..	1
Y. M. C. A. administrators (a Christian sect)	..	..	..	..	..	1
Men-at-arms (knicknamed "tommys" or "private.")						2

The above busy themselves in chewing beef (bully) and biscuits (12 oz. = 1 lb. bread = 12 oz. flour = 12 oz. rice) disregarding in toto surrounding Din which is *absolute incarnate*.

Slam ! Bang ! Clash ! Crash ! Pop ! Rat-tat ! Bump ! Smash ! Dom-dom !

Noises of this kind, and indeed, even more so, impinge upon each and every tympanum, but these men are entirely equanimous, and continue to masticate freely. What are these noises you may ask. They are SHELLS and BOMBS (fresh parā).

Presently a "Black Maria", speeds with unparalleled celerity per doorway of dug-out. You will doubtless think of a female

negress so swiftly running. But no, this is semi-humourous knickname for shell of largest dimension. Before any remedial measures can be inaugurated, such as pouring water over, etc., it has blown off. (Fresh para and stars).

* * * * *

They look around circumspectly still chewing with flegmatism. One seat is void, *i.e.*, empty (fresh para).

At this point I would add that British soldiers, as is notorious converse commonly in a dialectic and impure form of English tongue. To illustrate (as we journalistic fellows say) the "local colours" I have altered rather boldly, and not without deep regret, orthography of "Well of English Undefined." Hence wrong calligraphies and also grammars for which I am well aware of.

Private Skilly, demonstrating with dirty fork that void gap already referred to, enunciates "Pore ole Bill, wasn't 'e there since 'arf one tick ago, look you? (Sic).

The remainder nod, munching sadly.

Private Skilly says "well 'e's gorn aloft." (Sic) (*i.e.*, become deceased and blown-up).

The remainder nod even more sadly.

The Bdc. Sergeant-Major Springs upright upon his feet. "Attention by the left"! he roars rather loudly. This all do, "Remove hats" is the next consecutive command (also obeyed in). He continues, "Corporal Queasy will play with a 'Melodean' (a wind instrument of haunting sweetness) Remainder will sing with their mouths, taking time from right-hand man of front rank Commence."

Thereupon, each and every begins to sing with suitable gestures a Dirge or Death-Knell of lamentable lugubriosity, concerning awfully untimely demise of late boon comrade.

Can any scene be more poignant? I doubt so. This done they proceed to eat their grubs once more.

Soon after a stertorous cry is heard without. "The Turks come! To arms! To arms!! The Turks are excessively

adjacent, and ever running forward! Hurry, Hurry, or will be too late!"

Brigade Sergeant-Major in a thunderous voice orders "By the right Double-quick march and no bones about it," and all with one accord uttering peons of defiance issue out and rush along, firing guns and throwing bombs and shells in every direction. The Brigade Sergeant-Major's voice (say indeed clarion) booms louder and louder and even loudest. "Squod! Form into fours! "Right About! Stand Easy! Volly! Volly! Volly! "By numbers, Affix bayonets."

Good God what a skirmish!

Was there a man squirmish?

No, nor one wormish (*i.e.*, funky coward)

What wrecked they good Heaven?

They said we are 7.

But we'll fight against even 11.

Or indeed more (*i.e.*, if necessary).

The old men said

Take care or you will be dead.

They said—go to bed (*i.e.* Be silent) Excelsior.

But how can I, a poet of mediocre calibre only (Alas!) sing of such epical heroics? T'were almost bootless. Indeed the theme is such as might shirk a Shakespeare (William) or even a Sir Rabindranath Tagore. I should be glad if the latter incredibly erudite Indian gentleman would vent his opinion *re* this moot point and if he will correspond directly to me I will willingly pay postage.

Meantime the Battle rages hither-thither and thither-hither and indeed in all directions. The air is so dense with fleeing projectiles that to see at all is a pukka enigma. Volcanoes spout up from the earth's abdomen (those are subterranean mines.) Fire spits from Heaven's breast in lavish quantity. These are aeroplanes or Zeppelins. Other shots fly horizontally: others again in a parabolic manner.

On the Turkish side may be espied Hunnish soldiers pumping poisonous gas : also boiling oil. What a truly shameful thing for they are strictly versus regulations (*vide* Geneva convention).

How often have we said to kindly note that G. O. C. regard your conducts with grave displeasure, and please state your reasons in writing for information of said eminent officer at earliest possible convenience. To which (so Sergeant Higgins says) they have always replied kindly quote number and date of Order prohibiting such acts or a certified true copy, as same does not appear to have been received in this office. To this we could only reply a non-possumus (office records, etc., being left behind on L. of C.). So in the meantime they go on briskly squirting. It is, indeed, a devilish quandary as even a civilian can clearly see. Needless to say we as citizens of B. E. disdain utterly to do such low class and third rate trickeries, and in any case apparatus for such demoniac purposes is not yet available for issue from Ordnance Department.

The Turks march on.

"Halt who comes there" cried loudly Brigade Sergeant-Major. "Advance one and give counter-signature." But all in vain. He orders "Shoot! Shoot! and take awfully careful aim."

But there are no shots left. Nought but bayonets and swords and sticks and stones (but not many).

Hope is indeed forlorn Ah me! As last gambler's toss-up the G. O. C. orders "Advance the Caterpillars"! What, good heavens, are these you will say. To describe exactly would be traitorous act for me, and strictly against Defence of Realm. So I will merely say that this is knickname for latest prodigiosity of Science. It has 14 cannons and 42 "maxims."

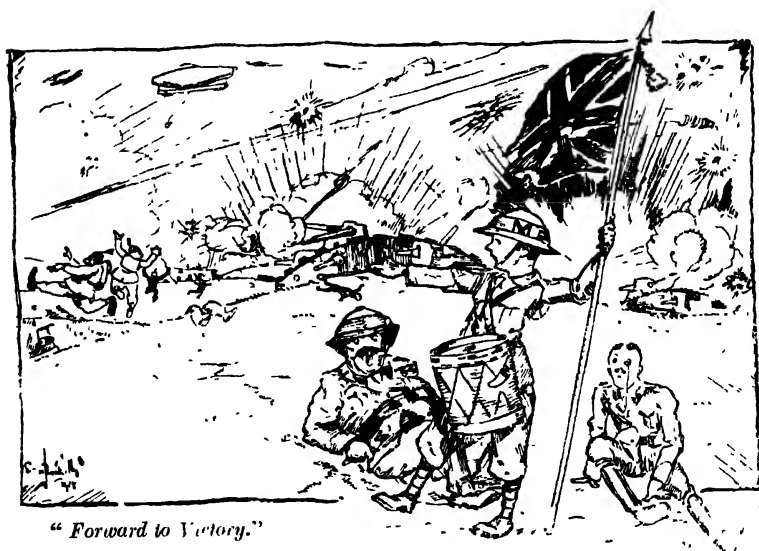
Snorting and puffing they advance subverting all before them. Huzzar! Huzzar!!

But they stagger: they totter: they stop, what is up? (Fresh para).

They have no more petrol.

The general tumbles down, punctured by innumerable wounds, and with him the OLD FLAG he was so arrogantly transporting. Also the D. A. Q. M. G., and G. S. O. 2 in similar fashion.

All is over. But stav ' what miracle is here ? A little drum-boy (aetat approx. $15\frac{7}{12}$ years) alone faces foes. He rushes. He lifts up tumbled general, and also FLAG. Then in a pipey treble (rather Alto perhaps) he exclaims "Forward to victory" pointing at the same time with his drum-stick. And then one and all, helter-skelter, hugger-mugger, begin to rush forward shouting with triumphant emotions. The Turks flee away with illimitable velocity screaming timorously.



"Forward to Victory."

What a glorious victory !

The general was not mortal, only sickly by reason of wounds. He said "Who is that d-boy." D. A. Q. M. G. told to him "John Jones." He said "Summon him" (which was done). The G. O. C. said "Drumboy John Jones you are not a boy You are a heroical man. I make you into a second lieutenant straitaway. Also I give you the V.C. and C.B.

Thirdly I order you to become my A. D. C. vice that dead one over there."

Then the tears bubbled down his hairy old cheeks and he cried lachrymatorily "3 cheers for 2nd Lieut John Jones, C.B., V.C."

Thereupon, what a stentorious Hurragh! Hurragh!! Hurragh!!! filled the welkin. Then the General said "go and do your duty."

2nd Lieut. John Jones, C.B., V.C. said "very good sir."

PICKE LAL, B.A.

XIII.

Babu in Baghdad.

Perhaps the first in all History of earthly globe (God knows) was myself (Babu Piche Lal, B.A.) ! In this connection there is another impudent and rather shameless S. and T. clerk in 7th Division who claims that I, Abdul Karim, firstly of all Indian clerical establishment entered Baghdadish Urban Limits. But this, believe me, is an arrant pack of cock-and-bull. I was first of invading host (clerical) and Doctor Hatu Ram, Indian Subordinate Medical Department, will corroborate, if required, in due course of law.

The city is a very antique one, some thousands of years ago at the very least. but it is not yet entirely finished. But what can you expect with these lazy Turkish rascals, all dally dally and shilly, shally etc.? What indeed ?

The Sanatery Bandobast is entirely shocking, and Dr. Hatu Ram upheld righteous hands and pursed lips in virulent condemnations. He asked to one Arabic shopman "Re these dirt in street, kindly inform why do you throw them, making bad smell after many days ?"

That man only shirked shoulders, and twisted hands upwards, sniggling contemporaneously.

I then said (with ironical innuendoes). "Perhaps you like very much, and are warmly addicted to rotten stinks, isn't it ?" He said "All stinks have been bestowed on us by God the Inscrutable, the All-merciful. Who are we that we shall say. This stink is Good One, and that stink is Bad One ? To a true believer, Attar of Rose-Leaves is no more sweet than the perfume of decay. God is Great," with that he proceeded to spittle and expectorate in a very careless and profuse manner rolling eyes grimaciously.

I said secretly to Dr. Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., “Avast! Avast! (a navel interjection meaning Have a care, and keep a good look out for squalls in offing.)” “This man, if I misjudge not, is an inveterate Mahomedan. Such deluded bigots are willing to cut your neck for two chittaks of ghi, and even mine too, in firm belief that by reason of such murderous outrage his soul will abscond to Heaven *ek dum* (to use a vernacularism) and live for ever with many loosewomen knicknamed Houris, what boshes indeed! Let us not lead him into Temptation. In all cases, he is unworthy of our societies.” So after corroborating with the truth of that shopman’s final statement re greatness of Deity, we exuded away to another locality in bazar.

Being an agile pedestrian as already known to readers, I advanced along with customary athleticism until Dr. Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., became utterly perspired. In this connection he has a very fat body re which I have oftentimes joked him amiably. Whether owing to excessive fatigue as he complains, or, as I stoutly aver, owing directly to reckless and negligent footsteps, his right boot impinged upon some peels (whether from lemon or orange is uncertain) and in a trice he became a prostrate. Owing to my natural instinct and indeed aptability for leaderships I was “in the van” rather, as we say in Army talks. Consequently I did not apprehend this downfall though I freely consent I heard a loud cry and subsequent commotions. But believing these to be strident and cacophonious screechings of Arabian urchins peddling wares and edibles (with which Baghdad unhappily teems to an incredible extent) I proceeded to advance and whistle happily and melodiously being carefree. When lastly I turned round genially to make some more jokings, re his adiposity of tissue, I saw that Dr. Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., is absent. Immediately thoughts of Murders, Martyrdoms, Homicides, or at any rate Torments and Kidnapperies were pricking my startled heart. So without a thought for self, but only of good-friend in Danger, I re-sprinted (to use sporting

metaphor) on same track backwards. After about $2\frac{1}{2}$ min. swift running I to great joy but equal stultification espied said good friend seated on floor of street with all around a crowd of rascullions (including some British soldiers) laughing with unstinted glee. I said "why do you thus sit Doctor Sahib? Have you then abandoned all dignity?"



"Why do you sit thus?"

Thereupon he began to scream and shout at me (all so faultless) in a highly irascible and immodest address. Meantime all around even more cracked their sides risibly.

At first I thought he is sun-struck poor fellow. He has secretly drunk wine. He has sudden cataplexy. But soon I learnt that he had slid upon some fruit peels (as previously intimated) and, contrary to intention and indeed wishes, was compelled to be seated with celerity. On that very spot he had since remained, seating, and impeding traffic strictly contrary to police hukms. So I said with sharp asperity "Arise without delay. Are you not shamed and bashful?" He said "Be silent Ape and Ass! (Sic) I have broken one or more bones in my Sacrum and blood is flowing. Call ambulance

forthwith." But this, I had shrewdly surmised, and indeed stated openly, was a claim altogether without foundation. Upon examination all that had become broken was :

Boxes, pill, containing balsamic unguent	2
Penis, fountain, with gold nib (so he said)	1

The ink from latter had, as I pointed out, deceived him re flow of blood. Also Sacrum (an interior bone) could not approach nearer to earth than $1\frac{1}{4}$ feet approximately owing to superincumbent fats in surrounding localities forbidding. This was cordially endorsed by R.A.M.C. sergeant bystanding, who further stated "not $1\frac{1}{4}$ feet but 2 at least." Thirdly that unbiased witness and myself both demonstrated that "How lucky is it that (assuming some slight abrasure has occurred) you have that unguent available for immediate application and instant relief from painfulness." (This however was subsequently found to be impracticable, owing to all that unguent having been impregnated in to trouser-pocket.

After this, the pleasure of this so jolly excursion was dimmed and indeed obfuscated, for Dr. Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., became altogether ill natured, whatever I said of a spritely and facetious kind he only answered either re

(a) Amount of compensation (if any) Government of India will pay for my downfall.

(b) Insanitary nature of Baghdad. I would add that he has determined to indite Highly Medical Essay on "Preponderating necessity for Incineration in Babylonia, including Dry, Wet, and Miscellaneous Refuse," with 4 illustrations by author and he is going to send it to you for publication (Rs. 150) I told to him "you will not get a decimal of that sum. I myself do not receive so much, secondly I said, "I doubt lest Editor will not altogether "pluck" you. However I will write to him and see what can do by "backstairs influence." So I have done so. But all the same I cannot recommend Dr. Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., as contributor, and I think in any case he

would become unduly inflated with priggish coxcombery if published.

Having a strong longing to purchase some comestibles and confectionaries, I in spite of grumpishness of Dr. Hatu Ram, entered large emporium in English fashion. There was there one youth. Smart he was as new pin which I cannot deny wearing pink European tie and boots with buttons (in lieu of laces) of purple colour. Also other clothes too numerous to mention. Furthermore he was smelling of sweet and high class perfume. This fellow then began to chatter rapidly in Hindustani tongue asking "What you want please," etc!

Becoming rather choleric I said "In the first place pray inform to me by what token you know certainly we are Indians : in the second place assuming that to be so even, by what right do you take us for ineducated clods or illiterated coolmen, that can speak no tongue but their mother one? Conduct your observations either in English tongue or Arabian ditto of which I know more than a mere smatter."

When he had by frequent repetition understood this, he became entirely contrite, saying (in English) that "I will speak either English, French, Italian, Russian. All good. Turkish German, Bah! Pooh!! No good." So I said "On due consideration perhaps English will be more convenient." (This I said mainly for benefit of Doctor who is not so linguistically proficient). "To begin, have you any sweetmeats for payment issue."

He said (what cross ignorance) "Sweetmeats? Sweetmeats? I have no meat. That is butchers work. Go to butcher please, and having gone, tell him sweetbreads, not sweetmeats."

I became calm to ominousness, saying with praiseworthy politeness "I do not require tutorship from alienated shop-boys in English tongue which is perfectly acquainted to me. I stipulated recently sweetmeats and I will not abate one jot. If you cannot understand, give me some lollipops, and damn to you and yours."

He said with stammers "I have some nice vinegar pickles!" (Forsooth!)

Laughing bitterly, I turned to Doctor Hatu Ram exclaiming "What can a cultured gentleman do with such impercipient nincompoops?"

Though having almost abandoned hope, I then began to read aloud previously prepared list of requirements, such as, "Drops, acid, pear, or other variety 1 lb. Eyes, bull's, mint, pepper, 2lbs. etc., etc." All the time he remained a dumb idiot gaping and goggling. So at last I said "Bus. I am going to go," adding kindly to shop-youth. "I do not blame you so much. Do not be unduly cast down! Study! Study! That is the key of Good Success, and soon (who can tell?) you will speak some English. No doubt also we shall get items at some other emporium." He said "Shall I advise Honour where to go for you. Very good place for you. Very good, very nice, very clean."

I said with genial unsuspection. "Do please, and thanks awfully. If you will tell me name of place and explain road thither, I will thank you more" He said "The place is called Hell. You cannot miss the way." Whereat he made a most indecent sign.

At first I thought I have heard wrongfully. But no. On being addressed that nefarious youth repeated same thing but with even more scurrilous addendas. Utterly distraught at such inhuman insolency I permitted to be led away by Doctor Sahib, saying not one single word in reply. Indeed what repartee is there in English tongue suitable to occasion? If any reader knows of one, I beg him (or her) to send to me by registered mail, and I will go back and wither that perky upstart at early convenience.

As for sympathetic words of any kind from Doctor Hatu Ram I not only received nil, but in lieu upbraidings. He was saying "You are a stormy petrol. Wherever and whenever you go there are strifes and strafes and rows and jagras, till I am sick

I shall now return to camp riding in bazar tum-tum. You can go to that address so kindly given by shopman, and buy whatsoever you hanker. That is my word, say what you will."

What can you do with such a crocketty fellow? At the end I was compelled to accompany him, and was, on top of all humiliations hitherto, mulckted up to Rs. 2 as. 4 for rotten bazar tum-tum. What, pray, is Military Governor doing you will ask in permitting such incredible avarice? To this I can give no categorical (or indeed any) reply.

To sum up in peroration. Baghdad is nice, but not *so* nice. In my opinion, *e.g.*, Ahmednagar or Shahjahanpur are so much nicer, either or both. Prices for each and every commodity constitute crying shame, (indelible pencil as 4 and khaki umbrella Rs. 5 as. 14, etc., etc., and even more so). There are no modern vehicular traffics adapted to sight-seeing and globe-trotting. In fact considered in light of metropolis or resort of pleasure, Baghdad is in my opinion little else but a Specious and Catch-Penny Bamboozle.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

XIV.

In Love.

It is, perhaps, a mootish question whether a mere unpoused Indian clerk can, with propriety, write of a so sublime (and indeed tactful) theme as above. Doctor Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., answers with most emphatic negation. He says "You (Piche Lal) are a priggish ninny. In the first place you are ignorant (I hope) of the very rudiments of this Art. If not, then Fi to you and For Shame. In second place, such topic is, in my firm opinion, indecent and will be erased by Chief Censor doubtless, who is a highly moral fellow "

Sergeant Higgins, S. and T. Corps, on the other hand says "Rots! Why should you indeed not write re Love? Why, "it is the most popular of indoor pastimes. Write away Good "Scrivener, and slap it on thick, (sic) but, by my advice, you "will employ asbestos paper and a platinum pen." (What he means God knows, but I can testify he was not under influence of liqueur, which was my first surmise.)

Captain J. H. Beresford (O. C. Mule Corps) was even more consolatory. "What, Piche Lal? Omit *Love* from your "series? It is unthinkable. You owe it to your public and "who more capable to treat of its mysteries than a young man "imbued with lofty ideals, gifted with both imagination and "erudition, and the possessor moreover of a wide knowledge of "mankind—and womankind?" Those were his exact words, which I copied that very instant, asking him to initial kindly, which laughing heartily he did so.

Love may be divided into 3 grades—Divine, Human, and Beastly. If we consider the central one of these we will find it sub-divided into Fatherly, Motherly, Sisterly, Brotherly, etc.,

etc., according to relationships of each and either. Lastly Sexual, and it is this sub-section of which I shall write.

Captain Beresford stoutly avers this one is a Mystery. In my opinion, it is a Pure Enigma. I have fallen into Love : that I acknowledge freely, but why, I cannot say in the very least. I will now relate all the business.

I was in Bâghdad on the afternoon of the 20th ultimo equipped with pass "on Urgent Duty" kindly furnished by C. O., and in Grand Bazar I met a very gentlemanly individual, who said in English "Sir, I am Armenian Christian antiquarian, by name "Professor Meli. Are you desirous by chance of purchasing "some curios, for I have such in great quantity, and at a nominal "song absolutely?" Having at least six or eight rupees and feeling rather Devil-May-Care, I said "Yes, I am liking curios "very much. Also "souvenirs" as our French allies say. "Kindly hasten to exhibit them to me." To which he assented with marked politeness saying "Sir, please deign to insert your "honorific body into this unworthy low-class shop." So I did as requested.

Good Heavens ! What an utter pell-mell of rotten old dirty rubbishes, *viz.*, *e.g.*, sticks and stones, and beads, and pots, and knives, and heathenish idles, etc., after some rather scornful disparagings, I said, taking a mere mud brick, on which was some illegible writing, "I will have this article. How much my good peddler?" (The original cost was certainly not more than nine pies.) He said "Ah, you have unerringly snatched the gem of my collection" "Sir you are a knowing one Ahah ! "I need not inform to your worship that this Assyrian brick is a 'unique Page of History. Speaking strictly, it is without price. "But to *you*, I will sell for forty rupees. There ! a bargain such "as you will not again get in Asia." To so great a degree had amazement and indeed some pardonable shirtiness overwhelmed me, that I cannot tell what all I then said hotly. To which that cheat and liar replied coldly "Ah, I thought—wrongly—that you are honourable Indian gentleman of high position and

emoluments. You say you cannot afford to this brick. Very well. Finish. Bus. No harm has come to you. Eh? Then why do you so shout?"

I said with ineffable scornfulness, "Firstly I am not shouting. Secondly by what token do you impudently assume that I cannot afford to this meesly brickbat? Do I then appear to be so awfully oppressed by Indigent Penuriousness? Know then, Oh badly-bred cheap-jack that, if I so willed, I could buy all these shoddy lumbers and ends and odds by a mere stroke of pen. I do not buy this nasty brick because it has a crack or crevice. So there to you!"

He was by this time reduced to trembling modesty, enquiring often and often, "Please Sir state what else you are searching in Antiquary Department that I may have honour to supply. Doubtless this brick is grossly defective, as you so truly state." After a moment's cogitation I said "Have you some Baby-lonian mummies? I am rather desiring one or two for my new mofussil residence. Expense no objection," ("ahah" I thought chuckling artfully in my heart. "Now higgler and huckster that you cannot do! Eh?")

But he could do nevertheless, stating "Ah yes. Babylonian mummies. I have large stocks, though not so common as Egyptian ones. But not here now alack! After 10 days without fail. I will order." "I was feeling uneasy but nevertheless I said firmly. But must be Royal Family. I will not take vulgar ones."

He said "I stock only Royalties, on that you may rely, and I will give you a written certificate in four languages. Will your honour have Ladies or Gentlemen?"

Though by this time utterly decomposed, as may be guessed, I said briskly "I will have one gentleman and one lady please."

As I said above words, a female figure entered, good golly! What a physiognomy! What a blooming cheek! What teeth and hairs! In fact what a "Belle" generally! And with a tender smile so heart-ravishing as to be almost inhuman. And

to boot such a perfect lady. Indeed a Lady of Ladys. That shopkeeper said "This is my daughter Pepistasia Meli, called 'in affectionate intimacy Mademoiselle Pipi. She speaks "French a lot, but English few words only."

Now I do not think that anyone will say that I am lacking in savoir-faires (a French expression) I am indeed by nature rather a "Dasher." But on this occasion I was so mentally afflicted that I could only say bashfully (two or three times in repetition) "I am Babu Piche Lal, B.A., S. and T. Corps." (The above shamefulness was clearly due to Love's first prickings). Then lastly my good breedings returned and I enquired with gentile gracefulness "How do you do please?"

To that Madem Pipi (I shall always thus call her though for the present only behind her back of course) proceeded to become very chatty and loquacious but all alas! in French tongue to which I am not so adept

Nevertheless I smiled and nodded head, as though agreeing heartily, saying at intervals "Oui. Oui, Bonjour" (another French phrase suitable to the occasion).

All the while her male parent was smirking sweetly, and talking in sometimes French tongue and sometimes English and sometimes half and half. until at last we were all talking contemporaneously and laughing vehemently at each other. Hey day what a nice party!

Suddenly Professor Meli cried in English as though to somebody calling (though I did not hear) "All right, all right. I am coming. Do not become fidgeted." So he went out saying "I will return in half an hour or two. My little Pipi will exhibit to you sir anything you wish to examine. You must merely specify Department of Art desired." I thanked him very cordially and shook his hand in an amiable manner.

So then we two sat down and I thought to myself "now I shall inform her re my ardent passion. What a good Fortune!" But it soon became clear to me that is not so easy. One cannot with propriety say I love you without any introductory para-

graphs. That is contrary to Society Etiquette. So I said (fanning myself) "It is very hot to-day is it not so?"

To which (after repetition) she understood, and said "Yes—very hot—bad—Brrr," adding some ejaculations in French tongue.

Then I said in continuation "I am so hot, Are you also so hot?"

She replied (again) "yes—very hot—bad—Brrr," after that we became silent for about six minutes.



Oh Tongue-Tied Taciturnity!"

Oh Mute Modesty! Oh Tongue-Tied Taciturnity! What a Bane what a Bugaboo (I might say) are you to Trueloves!

Then suddenly an awful speculation oppressed me. Perhaps "she has already married and has some children?"

So I said with emotion "Have you some children by chance?" when I had explained this to her with appropriate gestures, she again became very chatty in French tongue, and at such a rapid rate that I could not understand even approximatively. She at last worked herself into rather a

passion. But I did not mind one whit, as the answer was clearly in the negative.

Then I said to myself "Be bold Piche Lal, Be bold. Otherwise you will certainly not attain to this lady." So I said "will you kindly permit me to grasp your delicate hand?" doing so at same instant.

After a moment's hesitancy, due doubtless to coy virginality, she permitted me to complete this act of intimacy. But after this ensued another most gloomy silence, (5 mn. approx. by my watch).

Suddenly an excellent theme flashed into my brain-pan. How can I fail to have discovered before! What a crass fool! I said warmly, "Your hand, which I hold, is similar to a Flower."

This she understood for she replied smiling in a provocative manner "What flower?" Why I said so, I cannot think. Certainly I was lovesick, and that is all the explanation. But at all events I replied "It is like a tiger lily." (Undoubtedly I should have replied "Rose" of course, which I need not say I shall do if similar query is propounded anew). After this, becoming emboldened, I said "But not only your hand is beautiful. You are even more beautiful elsewhere. In fact you are a preternaturally smart wench, and I have honour to inform you, with all emphasis at command, that you are my darling Queen. Also I love you extremely." As I was about to repeat all this, she not understanding, Professor Meli entered coughing deeply.

I released her hand with agility and seized nearest objective which was (Bad Luck) that 3ce accursed Brick-bat.

"Ah," said Professor Meli, "I see my daughter has been persuading you to reconsider your opinion. But please do not buy that brick against good judgment. However, probably you are right. You will not have such opportunity again perhaps."

I said (what else could any gallant man say otherwise?) "yes, I will purchase this brick with much pleasure. It is on

“re-inspection an excellent brick, and, after all, what is a crack ?
“and I will bring money next time.”

He said waving hands “Oh money ! money ! what is it ?
“Do not mention it. But with reference to your commission
“for Babylonian mummies, I cannot remember if you kindly
“said 2 or 3.”

I said (again this madness is clearly attributable to nothing
else but love) “Oh, three certainly.” He said “One gentleman,
“one lady and what will be sex of third one ?”

I said “I leave that to your taste—and your nice daughter’s.”

He replied, “Very good, you do well. We will satisfy you,
never fear sir. You yourself will be surprised.”

Soon after this I absconded after shaking Professor Meli’s
hands, and bowing profoundly to Madem Pipi with kind
regards.

For her part she smiled in a very pregnant manner. In fact
all her attitude was fraught with yearning passion (though
latent). There is no doubt that love she bears to me is not
sisterly variety. I think myself it is undoubtedly sexual.

When I reached again into Grand Bazar what a whirl was in
my head ! How I sang and stamped to and fro until all the
standersby thought—and stated openly—“He is a wine-bibler.”
But what did I reckon ? not a tittle.

Oh Love, Love ! Yesterday I sneered you (ignorantly) and
to-day you have in a tick bowled me out and stumped me !
(Metaphor from footballs). Nevertheless Twice and Thrice
welcome are you, Oh, Love, Love, in this hitherto barren heart !
I shall now indite one or more highly amorous Odes to my Sweet
Darling. If next week you do not receive any instalment of
warlike snips and snaps do not be alarmed. Perhaps I shall be
busy loving.

Yours affectionately,
PICHE LAL, B.A.

XV.

HAY FOR THE FRONT !

(Once Again.)

Dear Sir, you will doubtless have become altogether a tenter hook thinking I have perhaps sadly deceased by reason of military exigencies in service of King and Country, or at very least mangled owing to my so long omission of usual Hebdomedal Warlike Snips and Snaps. But when God of War beckons his fingers, we fighting-men must bow. So it is then Hay for Boots and Saddles, and Figs for clerical functions ! When I personally received that solemn and yet ever-glorious call, which always needless to say makes all true warriors heart to boil (or at any rate very hot say 180deg. Fahrenheit) I was as stated in my last letter very inclined to amativeness towards Mademoiselle Pepistasia Meli offspring of Mr. Meli who is, according to own statement, oriental palaeologue and universal Merchant, though Dr. Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., says that he is Armenian old clothes man. This however is a filthy libel, and cannot sufficiently be depreciated. But in spite of my highly erotic state did I for one instant tarry or dally in those prim-rosy paths ? I need hardly say foresooth ! No, I donned water-bottle, haversack, spurs, jack, and other insignias of military ardour and went to that house in Baghdad, where by great good fortune Mad. Pipi (as she is called intimately) was only sitting. Though internally entirely decomposed by sight of such ineffable pulchritudity I began to speak with tones equally composed of :—

(a) martial exaltitude due to thought of once more death-grappling with savage foe.

(b) romantical melancholia at thus leaving loved woman behind.

At first I spoke in English tongue with great distinction, and illustrating each and every word with some appropriate facial or bodily contortion, how I was called away for service at Front, etc., etc., but she did not in the least comprehend, and at last became uneasy and restless, finally loudly invoking one Arabian menial having reputation (Why? God knows) to speak well English language. To him I confided the whole thing once again even more clearly, and at last that shatterpated dunce said "you are sick? No? All right. I can do." At the same time pointing to my stomach and nodding and grinning.

Though bitterly stung by disappointments, I proceeded to expatiate *thirdly*, in a manner which I think all reasonable readers will agree anybody but a pukka tom-fool will understand in half a tick.

I was saying "I" (pointing to self two three times) "am going to march" (Here I strided swiftly round and round room in a military manner saying left, right, right, left, etc.) "to the War." (Here I was assuming a ferocious countenance, and cutting and thrusting with vim and jumping forwards and backwards, and adopting a prone position behind table legs in order to aim gun and also sometimes throwing bombs and shells.) "I have come to say good-bye and indeed Adieu (the French equivalent) to Mademoiselle Pepistasia Meli." (Here I was shaking my left hand with my right one with great cordiality but with a saddish mien.) "She is a lady whom I esteem and apprise in a highly lavish fashion." (Here I was casting sheep's eyes and loving ogles at said lady.) "When I return laden with glory." (Here I was twisting round sharply and marching in reverse direction to one before, making as though piping loudly on military flutes and beating drums and tomtoms, also cheering and throwing hats in air contemporaneously.) "I shall then hope to be even more intimately acquainted to this lovely lady." This I acknowledge freely was a difficult

pantomime but to a man of wit not unsuperable, and I was doing it well when suddenly for no wordly reason in the least that execrable devil (Arabian menial) began to shout and bellow "No! No! This is Good House! Finish! Finish! This is Good House! Finish!

Thereupon, becoming utterly passionate, I began in turn to vociferate. Ditto Ditto Mad. Pipi, and at last as though to "put lid on" (slangs) three indigenous (*i.e.*, vernacular) crones came in unexpectedly and began to scream and mourn in a funeral fashion.

Of these utterly unladylike harridans and busy bodies, one appeared to me clearly the sole instigator of those damnable hubbubs, having clearly seduced the remainder. For she was always the first to wail, beat chest, and rock bust to and fro and vice versa, others conforming in a servile manner. This one I was enabled luckily to pinch in such a severe manner. and in such a tender place (surreptitiously of course) that without any comment whether of dissatisfaction or otherwise she hied awfully swiftly from that room, though still continuing to pule and blubber in adjoining neighbourhood, though much less uproariously. Having by this so successful "coup-de-main" (another French slang) routed from the field of battle the 1st line of hostile foes I was firmly resolved to commit an ambush upon the reserves, *viz.*, remaining two arabic hags or trollops. So I was accordingly manœuvring in a stealthy and astute manner towards the rear (I may here say that I am now so sodden with militaristic eruditions so please excuse to me for talking "shops" which may be rather a knotty riddle for civilian elements).

Ref. above incident it may be asked by flippant or insinuatory readers "Why Mr. Piche Lal, did you chose to attack firstly feminine antagonist and rather neglect masculine one, *i.e.*, -Arabian menial hereinafore mentioned?"

This charge, if charge can be called such a puerile—and indeed puelline—indictment, was proffered both by that sneering

jack-in-office. Sergeant Higgins, S. and T. Corps, and also Doctor Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., whom I did not think it of him and told him so in no measured terms. For the sake of my good honour, I shall now proceed to refute this impeachment in toto.

I. If I, who was commander at that very spot, thought this strategy was best one of all, who are these jim-crack "arm-chair critics" to deny me?

II. Having weighed pros and cons to utmost tola, I decided that the epidermis or cuticle of masculine antagonist will be so horny and cartilaginous, and insensible (almost) against mere hand or finger pinches, however adroitly committed. So good God! Cui Bono? I would ask. And if, as I shrewdly doubt, both Sergeant Higgins and Doctor Hatu Ram are ignorant of the meaning of this wise saw or pithy saying, then say Is Do not poke nose or indeed any other feature into other people's concerns without his (or her) permission.

III. That Arabian menial I would also say was an individual of violent and fanaticismatic tendencies. I was utterly armless and esconced in hostile territory. What if he, becoming sulky at such act (of pinching) would have seized a gun or sword and killed me without ado? What indeed?

If any reader is still doubtful as to this point let him or her send to me a money order for Rs. 5 to cover stationeries, copying charges, etc., and I will return (prepaid postage) a fuller and utterly infallible proof.

To return to last para. but four, when I was creeping in the manner of a military ground scout in direction of Arabic trollops who will come in Thank God? Mr. Meli. Soon, *e.g.*, in less than half an hour, all was explained, and each and everyone was laughing with bonhommy (another French word meaning good-manliness) except the pinched crone, who was clearly very fretful and tart. Even when I, per medium of interpretership of Mr. Meli, gave went to some very jocular and spiritely repartees such as "Oh Sahiba! Your voice is like to that of

the bulbul who was singing in the gardens of Harun-al-Rashid. I became fearful lest I may perhaps swoon by reason of excess of harmonical ecstasy, so I was compelled to pinch you to stop. To this you must attribute your misfortune or rather temporary incommodity. Very sorry so never mind." But even then she did not smile, but became more sour-faced. In the end I was obliged to pay Rs. 3 As. 8 as trifling honorarium. As she had firstly with great impudence demanded Rs. 100, I do not think it is so dear in price. Indeed I asked to her sarcastically that please may I repeat the outrage at same indemnification, but to this she refused.

But with regard to other purchases good Golly! I think (though I am not certain) that I am an undischarged bankrupt. Firstly those Babylonian mummies referred to in last Snips and Snaps, which I thought that surely these Mr. Meli will be unable to procure. But he has done, and rail and port charges are now (so he says) about Rs. 800 ! ! ! That is all my pay and emoluments for nearly one and a half years!

With regard to other minor purchases removed that very time to camp by an urchin on my behalf, these were :

(a) One lizard said to belong to an utterly extinct species about four feet in length and stuffed with bhoosa. This after some higgling and hoggling I beat down to Rs. 60 As. 8.

(b) One piece of furniture stated definitely by Mr. and Miss Meli to be a backsgammon board. This when repaired he says will be much sought after by Y. M. C. A. Institute or regimental coffee-shop who will give at least ten pounds, as they are very scarce in this neighbourhood and also very popular pastime. This was Rs. 30 only.

(c) One large piece of grey stone weight approx one maund and slightly carved at one end, affirmed by Mr. Meli to be "fresco of summer palace" of one king named Tiglath Pileser who lived in these parts some years ago. He (Mr. Meli) says he has had 2 offers from British Museum, London, but he will not sell except to a dear friend. Also if at any time I accept these

offers from British Museum all profits over £ 100 to go to Mr. Meli. This is only fair and I have signed bond to this effect. Rs. 120 was price of this peerless.phenomenon.

(d) Some necklaces and other gauds for Mad. Pipi which I shall not go into from a monetary point of view being love-tokens but very expensive all the same. These, needless to say, I did not remove from shop but myself clasped round her swannish neck, egged waggishly on by Mr. Meli and one of the three aged crones. Soon after this, my heart being full to bursting, I left for camp.

I have since had bitter recriminations with Quartermaster-Sergeant Higgins re weight of office furniture of mule corps (in which I have concealed above purchases) and he has reported me to Captain Beresford for having more than 2 A.T. cartful, affirming that I am transporting 6 dead crocodiles and large quantity of building materials, and if he doesn't believe it go and look and he cannot and won't be responsible. But by great good fortune Captain Beresford, O. C. Mule Corps, is also hotly in love, and only to-day he received four letters from the object of his emotion. So he is naturally ravished at her constancy and diligence, and quite careless of ought else. He said "Never mind Sergt. Higgins. We must try and bear it. We can't do without our Piche Lal and his office, and if he does carry about some crocodiles perhaps it is an old family custom or indeed religious observance."

So I returned in high feathers and did not wreck in the least of that double-faced shrew Sergeant Higgins who became forthwith both abusive and immodest. Not wishing to vie with him in such deplorable scurrilities, I said with quiet dignity about three or four times "sucks to you" and there-upon retired into the office.

I remain, Sir,
Yours affectionately,
PICHE LAL, B.A.

XVI.

Sartorial Calumniations.

A civilian ignoramous is too prone to aver jealously that "Oh Life of Soldier is all Beer and Spittles!" But I will take an oath so help me God, by jingo, that it is exactly opposite, *i.e.*, rather Pins and Needles. What we soldiers have been thro', since last three months toiling and moiling and groiling without ever a murmur or supining : No Pen can write : No Tongue can cry : For it is *Ineffable*.

And each and every of us from our valorous and highly-beloved Commander-in-Chief at G.H.Q. (whose name censorious restrictions compel me to conceal, but perhaps known all the same to your good readers) down to the smallest and most trifling bellowsboy of "C" complement, have

"DONE THEIR DUTIES "

with most incomparable heroics. With regard to clerical ranks too I have no hesitation to say that they have been no whit behind : rather "in the Van " to employ military parlance. And indeed how much more glory to them, who, heretofore, have delicately natured with all comforts, *viz.*, nice foods, clothings and beddings, loving wemen, etc., etc., and are utterly unwonted to this vulgar way of livelihood.

To take for instance my own case (doubtless only one of many) the Quarter-Master Dafadar would perhaps say "Only half ration ghi to-day, Babu ji, and no garlic or turmeric at all in the least, alas!" I would cry angrily "Cease railing, Oh you worthless fellow! Do you forget you are at the War? You are indeed lucky to have any grubs at all. Shut up." And I would not at all become fretfish, but singing and whistling perkilly, as good example to inferiors.

As another case, during 21 days and nights, I was compelled by military exigencies (and also Captain Beresford's strong order) to reduce kits (a military slang meaning baggages) to 18lb.!! I wonder how many of your voluptuous readers would perform this feat without break downs, whether psychical or otherwise! (No offence of course, all the same). This very fact was in the end the cause of a rather distressing thing to me which I shall relate partly because I am determined to cast the lie at their teeth to those malicious slanderers and fibbers out here who are recently spreading all sorts of shameless versions and fabulous puffery much to my own dishonour, of which said felons, one is a certain Quarter-Master Sergeant whom I shall not nominate but well known to your good readers doubtless, and one other a base-born bombardier in the R.F.A. whose name starts with G and Regimental No. 11372. Perhaps seeing their shame published to the civilised world they will be inclined to be bashful.

As already affirmed, Captain Beresford gave me a strong order that "All 'kits' are being reduced owing to heavy equine casualties. Your 'kits' including the Office must not be more than .18 lbs. All the remainder will dump here."

At first, I was so utterly aghast that I could not believe. Then I proceeded to explain to him that though I highly approved of the plan, it was quite impossible all the same, as the Office Requisites alone would weigh not less than 5 maunds (400 lbs.).

Captain Beresford then cried with a bitter laugh "Office? Here is my Office!" Thereupon he seized one Army Book 152, one copying pencil and one red and blue ditto. "If you are determined to have pens, ink and foolscap to which I know you are passionately addicted, you must carry them yourself. It is only a suggestion of course, but you might be able to roll up the pens in foolscap and blotting paper, and stuff them down the back of your neck where they would be immune from risk

“ of damage in transit. With regard to the ink bottles the only “place, I can think of is one in each of your trowsers pockets.” With that he went off huffily muttering what sounded to me like “Red on the Port Side” (??)

To comment adversely on the above remarks and suggestions emerging as they did from the lips of the Commanding Officer would be for me an offence under three (at least) different sub-sections of Indian Army Act. So I will not do, leaving readers to form own conclusions unbiased. In the end owing to my over-weening and laudable determination that Office (at all costs) must be so replete as possible, I stinted my own clothings etc., to an incredible degree of exiguity. This point should not be lost to sight of, believe me, for it was owing to this self-abnegatory conduct that afterwards shame accrued to me in the following manner.

We were in a camp in the midst of hostile and savage foes (as is usual). One night, sleeping like a low vagrant or common mendicant on Nature's Bosom (*i.e.*, Earth) I heard voices close to. I said in a gruff military manner “Halt, who goes there? Enunciate countersign or I shall indubitably shoot you.” Then I heard some whispers and a strange and awful gurgling sound. Then two human forms ran off swiftly but too dark to see who they are. Being rather terrified (Who shall blame me?) and feeling convinced that a nocturnal attack was in course of progress, I proceeded at the military “double step” and reported whole affair to Captain Beresford after arousing him from slumber with full particulars asking for kind instructions preferably in writing. He told me definitely to go to bed. I started to explain to him the urgent gravity of the situation from a military view whereupon he with all emphasis repeated the order but modifying the destination to one utterly blasphemous which I shall not repeat. So seeing the futility of further verbiage on my part I went back though I need not say not to snooze one wink all night for the safety of thousands (may be) lay on my sorry pate.

But at break of morn how was I gloriously and yet sadly vindicated!!! For it was found that Arabian marauders had perloined not only my trowsers but also solar 'topi' hat as well and thereupon fled. No other loss was reported in the whole camp which I attribute to my prompt vigilancies. The above trowsers I may say was a 'mufti' and not 'Sirkari' at all being of a nice variety called Jodhpurs, that is to say, broad and slack to below knee cap and therefrom cloth becomes very tight until the foot. This was a present from a paternal grandmother resident in Dacca so was not merely a smart costume but a nice souvenir also. The hat was not so valuable being only 'Sirkari Mal.'

Now the thoughtless reader will say "Oh Pooh Pooh this is not so awful. Good Heavens! Pish Tush! etc., etc." But perhaps he (or she) will be good enough to realise that this trowsers was my All-in-All, *i.e.*, there was no other at hand. Ditto for solar 'topi' hat. Secondly that very morning H. E. the C.-in-C. (G.H.Q.) was coming to inspect at 7 a.m.!! It boots not to say that I made excursions innumerable, in search of each or either but "No Go." All were saying and saying very sorry, cannot do Babu ji. You can have socks or shirt or 'pagri,' etc., etc., but never by chance hat or trowsers.

In the end much against my good judgment (and would, Heavens, it had not failed to be otherwise!) I applied to Quarter-Master Sergeant, who contrary to his usual wont, (and this should have warned me) evinced great cordiality and condolences, and said "Oh yes, we shall 'fix you up.' Don't you worry" But I naturally did so all the same until about 6-30 a.m. he returned with some articles which he introduced as one Highlandish 'kilt' (a Caledonian male petticoat) and a 'bonnet' of similar nationality. Also a pair of black stockings. I said: "But how I can don these? It is contrary to Dress Regulations." He said with airyness "Oh, the Army Commander won't notice you. You can stand over there by that heap of refuse. That will be protective colouring and will hide your

legs too. If he does address you pretend you don't understand him. Say you can't speak Irish for thats where he comes from. That will be all right. Just talk Scottish as you well can." (This was true, I having a good knowledge of the tongue).

With such smarmy words who he cajoling me, until lastly I said: "Right Ho Come on," and proceeded to investitate myself *sine mora*. Now a kilt is (as I have always upheld firmly) a grossly immodest garb and this specimen was even more so than average. But what could I do foresooth? One must cut one's coat as per one's cloth as I remarked at that very time rather wittily to Sergeant Higgins. I also added with perhaps equal Sapience, "need is must when Devil drives"



"Any relation of the late King of the Cannibal Islands."

and "Beggar can't be chooser." For how could I be absent from C.-in-C.'s inspection, and indeed to where could one flee or hide. No tents being available, and savage Arabians in all directions. So in the end, I esconced myself in privy manner by aforesaid Refuse Heap. At moment of parade a staff officer came in motor car and inaugurated a converse with Captain Beresford, and I heard him affirming that after all Army Commander can't come. Then that staff officer (an obese Lieut.-Col.) looked towards me and said: "If it is not an indiscreet question, who might your friend yonder be? No relation to the late King of the Cannibal Isles I suppose?" Thus he appeared to think was a highly humorous quip for he was snuggling and giggling to any extent. I will leave commonsense readers to decide this for themselves, for it is hardly necessary to point out that not only is such a suggestion not in the least either waggy or wittish but silly and senseless on the other hand.

Captain Beresford then turned and looked at me and seemed to be suffused with marvellous astonishment. Then he too began to laugh in a sycophantical manner thereby encouraging greatly that foolish (in my opinion) Lieut.-Col. who after buffeting him (Captain Beresford) forcefully in the Abdomen cried out, "I shall burst a blood vessel if I stay here." Whereupon he absconded in fits in the motor car and his chauffeur too.

Now that is the whole story and how these baseless reports have been spread abroad in the whole Army God knows.

I did *not* hold converse with H. E. the C.-in-C.

I did *not at all* (using the Scottish brogue) explain to him how to concoct a haggis out of two bag-pipes and some cairngorms.

I did *not* play upon the pibroch or other barbarian instrument and dance some 'flings' simultaneously.

The above is all rot and I shall be glad to you and your good readers to put a stop to such and other rumours in Mesopotamia, India, and elsewhere. English papers kindly copy

and oblige for it is awfully disheartening quandary for honourable and chaste Indian gentleman. The morale of the troops is good and we have vanquished the Turks decisively in this sphere. I think you will have some more good news shortly but of course I am not permitted to tell you what's up. The Indian Transport personnel have been made into combatants which is a great success already, and time enough too, though I am loath to criticise adversely G. of I. without cause. But what about clerical establishment ??? What, indeed !

There have been many important modifications of the ration both for men and animals lately. British troops are receiving 'dhall' (4oz. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in lieu of dried vegetables) a truly startling innovation, and Indians a bi-weekly issue of cocum and tamarind in lieu of lime juice, for scurvy reasons. There have been other similar rational changes owing to the sultry weather. Indeed, its very hot and we have to dress accordingly.

I remain,
Ever yours affectionately,
PICHE LAL, B.A.

XVII.

“ Are the English Race Fundamentally Inamiable or Superficially ? ”

The above Query was one of the subjects for Discussion chosen by our Debating Society (Social and Political) out here since about 6 days ago. All those who know me will not doubt for half a tick which side I spoused for after many years' connection (racially) with “ Ruling Race ” from highest to lowest (including Major-Generals two, Deputy Collectors one, and Additional Judicial Commissioners to G. of I., one) I can with confidence stoutly aver that, excepting in especial cases, they are not nearly so black as are painted, though occasionally I must sadly confess even much more so. But that they are sterling good fellows cannot be doubted for a moment.

With reference to that Debate (*vide* para. 1) I was straitaway up-in-arms with tooth and nail in sticking up on behalf of English nationality, but except one other fellow there, all were for the “ Ayes ” and Motion at Issue was passed *sine die* and with due form. That fellow was Mr. Malcolm Rogrdo, stated by himself to be a sprig or scion of a Portuguese family of eminent nobility, and offspring on maternal side of Queen Mary of Scotch by morganatic (*i. e.*, informal) marriage. So being of European extraction he was unduly biassed as was pointed out. I may say that as a dialectitian, I (to use flowery speech) won my golden spurs from even the unwilling lips of the Opposition Benches, and indeed gave vent to a number of highly erudite and suggestive remarks and speeches. In fact I am pretty cock-sure that some of the quotations employed (especially Greek and Latin, etc.) were not understood by any, though hotly applauded. But in the end even I was forced by numbers to yield and cry “ Quarter, Quarter ”! Soon after Doctor Hatu

Ram, I.S.M.D., exclaimed to Mr. Rogrigo, "You are not a fish, You are not a flesh nor a fowl, nor a red herring. In my opinion you are a Damnable Oddity." Simultaneously with the two last words he administered to Mr. Rogrigo two hard slaps, and so, misapprehensive lest there may not perhaps be a rowdy shindy I went back to camp. Since that time while thinking over that affair calmly and impassionately I am wondering whether after all I was a cowardly craven and should have at all costs (even facial slaps) adopted a No Surrender Policy, and shall I go back next week and defy them to the Death if need be? Recently, however, some dolorous experiences connected with nationality in dispute (English) have modified this extreme view and I am thinking that perhaps their argument is not so rotten as at first sight. So not with any hankering towards Acrimony (cursed be such thoughts) but with laudable idea of thrashing the matter to the very bottom, I shall now relate these experiences which may conveniently be divided into three paragraphs (a) (b) and (c).

(a) I went into office early one matutinal morning wearing amongst other apparels one European cravat or neck-tie mainly of a pinky colour. Soon after Captain J. H. Beresford, O. C., Mule Corps, also entered wearing (*Nota Bene*. This is critical fact.) one pair of vernacular shoes or sandals called "chuplees," which is contrary to King's Regulations. He said "Are you about to take part in some theatrical representation?" I replied in the negative. He said, "Take that thing off," with anger (or words somewhat to that effect). He also complained that a feeling of acute nausea had overwhelmed him. Seeing reference was apparently being made to my cravat I did so, though I much doubt even now if that was "lawful command" on his part. Doctor Hatu Ram says "Certainly not. You should not have done thus." He is moreover writing to a pleader in Allahabad for confirmation.

I then said to Captain Beresford, with the object purely to seek knowledge and for no other utter reason, "I am rather nescient

of A.R.I.* re Dress (regulations) and very sorry. So can you, sir, inform to me what is legitimate and what illegitimate? What licit and what illicit? E. G. vernacular sandles. They are, I must assume, the former, kindly confirm." No useful purpose will be served by a detailed relation of subsequent conversations, and I shall merely state that he neglected (intentionally or otherwise) to either confirm or deny.

Now the question which I would ask each thoughtful reader to raise in his own heart is "Is this Justice or Injustice? Amiability or Inamiability?" For my part I will keep an open mind.

(b) Be that as it may, there is no doubt that that Officer became ailing after two days and was evacuated to Hospital in Baghdad with biliary jaundice and D. A. H. I do not of course state that this is necessarily Retribution of Almighty Providence but it is rather funny all the same as each thoughtful reader (*vide* above) will agree. But without one shred of malice in my breast, I determined to visit him in Hospital being myself perchance in that Oriental Metropolis on dentistical grounds. For not only was such visitation dictated by etiquettish reasons but also sufferer will doubtless be glad and overjoyed to see old face again. Also there is a contingent bill of mine (Rs. 3-4) needing countersignature. Fourthly G. H. Q. are with customary importunity demanding immediate submission of "List of Honours and Rewards" at very earliest possible convenience. Perhaps Captain will recommend me for some or other increment, emolumentary or otherwise. So, inflated with such and other hopes, I purchased in Big Bazar Baghdad two seers of Arabian halwa (a local lollipop of cloying sweetness) Rs. 2 : one large tin of Japanese curried rabbit named "Banzai Nippon" (As. 12) : one bottle of whisky of a variety called "Rule Britannia" (Rs. 1-2) : Also since Captain Beresford was ever a veterate smoker, one bag of cigars which shopmen informed to me are not at all compounded of tobacco plant but some other

* Army Regulations o^c India.

sweet herb much nicer and including no "nickotines" or other mischievous bane and made in Bandar Abbas. Each cigar had an artistical band or belt of red white blue and khaki paper round middle stating in English "This is 1st class cigar. Smoke it and you will not smoke any other ever. Signed Hajji Ahmad, Bandar Abbas." I asked one corporal of the Garrison Police who appeared to be an educated fellow "Do you know this brand or trade mark please,?" who, after smelling and tweaking with his fingers, enunciated as his firm opinion that it is a Flor de Vulcano Fumigato and very well known in Army. Whereat, being set at ease, I hied off to No. 301 British General Hospital. Round about portals or precincts of that was a small thronging of soldiers of whom I asked from one "In what apartment of this institution does Captain J. H. Beresford, S. and T. Corps O. C. Mule Corps, 113th Division, M. E. F., infected with biliary jaundice and D. A. H. sleep and excuse troubling?." He said, after some period occupied in senseless laughter, "You mustn't spring these conundrums, on me like that. I'm a convalescent from shell-shock. I'm on no account to be excited. It's against the Hospital Regulations. You'll have "the sister" after you if you do that again."

I wondered at that time whose sister and why, but I soon discovered that this is a semi-military title given to a female Red-Cross Body known as the Q.A.I.C.O.R.N.S. (Queen Alexandra's Imperial Corps of Royal Nursing Sisters). Doctor Hatu Ram says he thinks there is one letter too many in this but is not sure owing to lack of Army List. Now the high-class medicinal attainments and ladylike solaces and palliations of these merciful and very creditable ladies is so much above all earthly praise and Heaven forfend that I should carp or cavil them except only re treatment of gentlemanly and honourable visitors which is indeed a shocking *bandobast*. But do not think that I am grumbling even at this. We soldiers are used to rough times.

As I was still conversing with that fellow I heard a dulcet and silvery-tongued voice at my elbow saying in a very genteel manner, "Can I do anything for you?" This was clearly on inspection the "Sister" referred to in penultimate para. So my arms being utilised in transporting parcels, bottles, etc., I assumed the position of attention smartly, and then bowed graciously once or twice saying "Miss or Madam as the case may be I thank you for your timely courtesy. My objective is to seek out Captain J. H. Beresford and convey to that ill officer some comforts and delicacies." So she said with marked sweetness "Yes, he is in No. 5 ward. I hardly think that he is really up to seeing visitors just at present. But as you have come so far, I hardly like to refuse you. What have you brought for him? Some fresh fruit would be very nice." So I showed her all those items starting with the Japanese rabbit. What was my astonishment when she after enquiring if this is a joke (what is there *jokable*, pray in my action?) became forthwith a voluble and thorough-paced scold!!! So much so that I was compelled to relinquish all those nice things in the Hospital Baggage Room i/c a British orderly who judging by his features appeared to me to be a thoroughly dishonest fellow and certain to filch all on a suitable occasion. I mentioned this to that "Sister" but she would not agree but became even more standoffish and so did that orderly. Furthermore, each of them declined to give me a written receipt, and soon after she went off.

(c) In the end after a perky assistant-surgeon had (egged on as I verily believe by that sulky orderly) attempted to administer to *me* against my will injections not only for paratyphoid but also bubonic plague and yellow fever alleging untruthfully that visitors had to be done so, I successfully reached into No. 5 ward and there in a supine position I saw Captain Beresford with a countenance the hue of a pukka Bombay mango of the most expensive category.

When after the usual greetings, I informed this truth to him personally, he became umbrageous and replied among other

things "Do you know what fruit your face recalls to me?" I replying in the negative, he said "Well, on second thoughts *one* fruit or vegetable is grossly inadequate to symbolise such a complex visage. I should say, speaking generally, that the first impression on the amazed beholder is undoubtedly one of pickled walnuts," (at this juncture the other occupants of beds began to chuckle foolishly and indeed continued to do so) "but there is also a strong dash of rotten meddler." (What fruit is



He became umbrageous."

this pray?) "Thirdly with regard to shape and configuration generally, I myself am irresistibly reminded of a parboiled yam I once ate of the least expensive category. At least I did not eat it all, as I was compelled to leave the table hurriedly." With that he turned over and began to sleep and snore.

Those of my friends and lovers to whom my facial lineaments are a well-known and welcome spectacle will realise that the above innuendoes are but the "figments of a brain deceased" as indeed Captain Beresford was, so there is no need of refutation.

Owing to extreme urgency of papers for signature, I was compelled to circumvent to the other side of the bed or cot, and place indelible pencil in sleepy hand, urging on him paramount

necessity of instant-action. While I was for the third time repeating this request to him all heedless, that same "Sister" came in "like a whirlpool" and, before I could say a single word in own defence or even recover indelible pencil, she whisked me out of the door and down two passages and outside same entrance as before, standing on door-step as I ran off swiftly and vituperating me unduly, though I must acknowledge, without bad language so far as I could hear in my startled state.

I only mention above veracious yarns since they are connected with high-class educated gentlemen and ladies and not low-class individuals of English nation, such as N.C.O.'s of S. and T. Corps who, as everyone will agree, are a notoriously unpleasant body. Also to some extent those of Ordnance Corps. This fact I do not think even they themselves will deny. At least I shall be very surprised, though that brass-faced fellow Sergeant Higgins might have sufficient impudence even for that. I am very deeply anxious to hear what is accepted opinion of English Educated peoples concerning Subject of Debate and invite confidencies from each and every, and I will do the same willingly.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

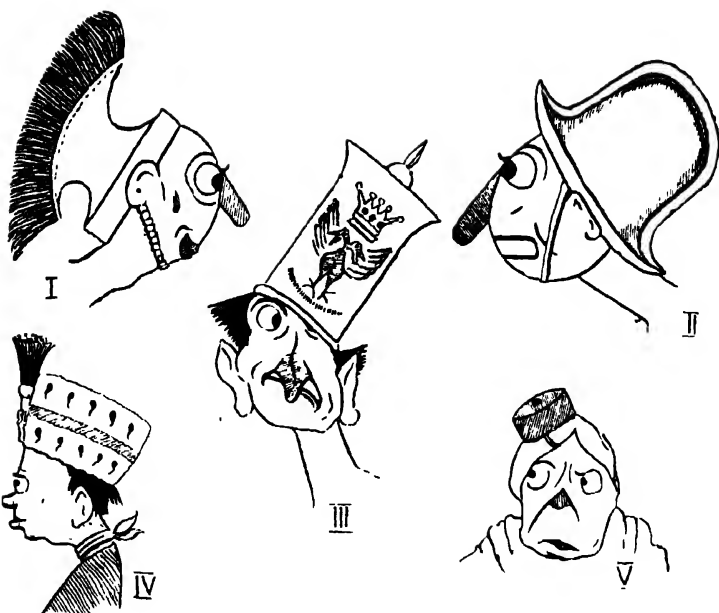
XVIII.

Indian Clerkly Scouting Brigade ? ? ?

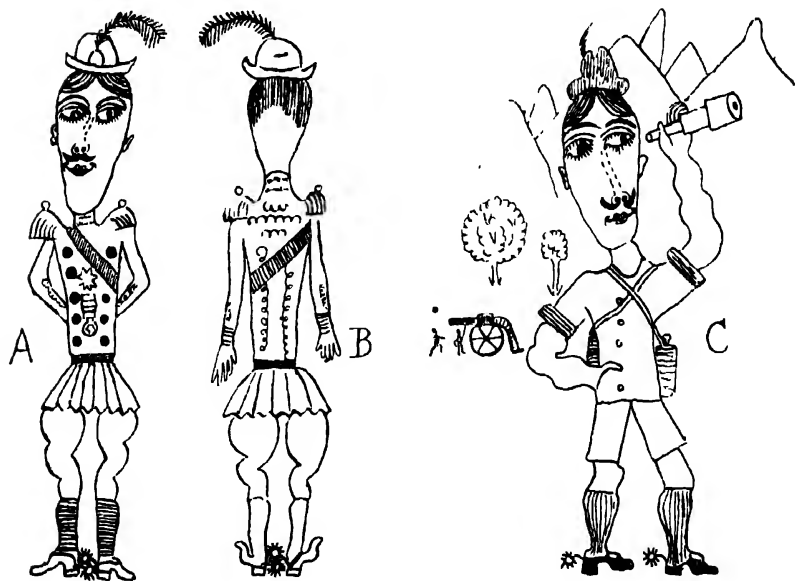
I have now longtime myself animadverted with infelicitous lugubrosity upon the lack of provision on the part of G. of I. (whether in malice or not I cannot say) to supply a legitimate loop-hole for the pugnacious proclivities of our Indian clerks and supply agents. Why is this ? God knows.

Having waited and waited hoping that some longer and stronger head than that belonging to myself will perhaps arrange all the bandobast, I am lastly become so irksome that I have (much against grain) taken matter under own wing. What is necessary for clerks and agents, etc., is a Martial Organisation similar to well-known and highly respectable Indian Imperial Cadets, and let it be called as per title above say I. This I do not think any fair critic can controvert.

Captain Beresford, S. and T. Corps, has written to me from Hospital Baghdad to state that for unfettered originality and greatness of conception the scheme is one which as you (*i.e.* me, Piche Lal, B.A.) so aptly claim will surely make those inveterate jacks-in-office and hoary "Bumbles" of Simla and neighbourhood quack and tremble in shoes. He also has sent me some illustrations (*vide* enclosed) of projected uniforms, *i.e.*, Nos. I to V. Now Captain being very sickly, I do not wish to decry these to least extent, but not even the veriest tiro in Art can deny that the faces are not so good, and for the most part rather unsightly. But hats are very fair I think and I have with modifications adopted No. II hat in my A and B herewith. This hat Captain Beresford says is known among hatters and traders as either a hauberk or a morion, he can't remember which. It was universally donned in days of "Old Lang Syne," and has (so Captain says) again become very popular



The above are drawn by Captain J.H. Beresford Esq^{re}



The Above are drawn by me
P.L. BA.

in France and neighbourhood where it is known under another vulgar synonym. Being made of "treble brass," it is adopted to withstand most serious climatic variations and also hostile artilleries. But as it is rather plain and slovenly I have garnished with one plumage (or feather) from some unspecified bird of prey. I think that in order to give "local colour" this should be rapt from the tail of some Indian cock or other, such as well-known pea or jungle variety. This will bring home to the hearts of each wearer Sweet and Holy Musings re his far-away Mother-land and while the fight rages gorily all around he will strive with mights and mains to preserve it inviolable and smerchless at any cost and will sooner surrender to hateful foe any garment rather than this trivial plumage. And if he does lose it, (say I) let him be drum-head-court-marshalled on that very spot for losing by neglect one (or more) Government feathers and cut from his pay by the D.D.O.*

With regard to A and B illustrations this is front side and back side representations of a nice Levee dress, i.e., for any tamashas, durbars, festivals, balls, etc., where King or other Royal Family Member is graciously present. I assert vehemently that Keynote of this Uniform (to employ Musical Hyperboll) must be Lavish Beauty. This the artist, though I do not wish to crack up myself unduly, has undoubtedly achieved. This the most fastidious fop or cockscomb can hardly deny. I would prefer (though not insjst) that coat is golden velvet and trowsers or breechings Red Velvet. Other accoutrements Do. Do. only more so if possible. A illustration is entitled "Stand at Ease! Eyes Left!!" and B "Right About Turn! Attention!!" Then please scrutinise for a petty period at No. C. This is pukka scouting dress for War and Keynote (*vide* above) is Stark Practicability.

Here is no garish dandy or carpet-knight but solemn warrior. This is entitled "Outpost of British Empire." See how his body is poised equitably upon both boots so as to be able to run

swiftly either forwards or backwards as military exigencies demand. Kindly observe also that careless, calm, and haughty mien so as to say what do I care even a button for a lakh or even crore of savage foes ? How his ears are pricked up for such ominous or pregnant sounds as may indicate Hostile Presences. How his highly trained nose is abnormally distended in order to detect and analyse any suspicious smells, whereat he will return at that rapid rate of military locomotion known as "Knees Up" and report accordingly, returning without delay to his Post of Danger in the same cursory fashion, refusing disdainfully all rests and refreshments. Is there any furious and utterly undomesticated horse (or mare) in Remount Department nobody can ride him (or her) ? He will do so and entirely tame him or her. Aided with those same equestrian spurs he can climb and ascend any earthly thing, even poles, telegraphic of the latest pattern, or those lofty trees as per illustrations (No. 1 gum-apple No. 2 banyan) he will ascend in half a twinkling if ordered to do by superior officer in execution of his office. Also they (spurs) are useful in kicking stairs or steps upon the glacial perpendicularities of those Awfully chasmatic Monticles so skilfully depicted (q.v. please near the horizon).

In fact he can doubtless go anywhere, and do anything, except run away, which he cannot do, preferring to die utterly on that very spot, owing to unlimited number of gashes and holes, in his person, caused respectively by hostile assault, and battery. And then his foes, lost in admiration, will proceed to afford him very decent sepulture according to religious denomination interning with him discs, identity, green, as per recent General Routine Orders.

The above is what may be justly called a pithy epitome of what a clerical scout might, could, should, would, and (in my firm opinion) will and shall be. I am a cautious fellow monetarily, but I will freely wager Rs. 5 that this unit will prove to the military authorities a regular nest-egg, godsend, and

windfall. Once put the scheme into the hands of an Indian gentleman possessing a good store of military lore and wisdom, filled with tact and gusto, imbrued with alacrity and impetuousness, agog with ambition on the one hand and premeditation on the other. Give him (to start) Rs. Two Lakhs and Free Field and no Favouritism, and you will be surprised how far he will go.

Now I do not claim that in the great continent of Hindustan there are no such men (*vide* above). And far be it from me good Heavens to poke and pry myself into things unduly. But in justice to all concerned I will say that, only since two days ago, a Person of Illustrious Integrity and almost World Wide Notoriety said to me "You are the only man, Piche Lal, in this connection," and after a pensive pause repeated even more forcefully "You—are—the—Man."

To which I, all red with modesty replied that "No! No! You are too fulsome! I am a lowly babu, seventh grade, temporary. Bus. How could I suspire to such grandiloquencies? By Jove!" etc., etc., as was only natural. So then he said with great earnestness of demeanour "Piche Lal you must not think of yourself. What do the Sacred Books enjoin to us? Live and Strive for the others. The road is hot and dusty and dirty. It has no shadows or dak-bungalows. But it is our Simple Gaol." To this what could I say without being rather blasphemious? So I said "very good, I will do." (This fellow wishes to remain an incognito, so I must veil his anonymity as requested).

Now what I suggest is following simple procedure. Let me be forthwith recalled by G. of I. from M. E. F. by wireless application through the usual channels and attached temporarily to Political Dept. with salary of Rs. 300. And let there be summoned at Simla or other convenient centre one Conference or Committee consisting of myself, H. E. Viceroy, C-in-C., Q.M.G. in India, Director of S. and T., etc., etc. We can then in freedom and decorum discuss "Ways and Means."

If these eminent big-wigs don't approve, then there is no harm, and I will return gladly to former sphere, but expenses should be paid of course. Finally, I will add that I am sure that with some sympathetic wire-pulling on the part of your well-known correspondents of Bombay and vicinity the powerful hands of Government might well be forced to relinquish their attitude of Aloofness and indeed Prejudice and (in lieu) grasp in a cordial grip the projected Olive Branch (*i.e.* Indian Clerkly Scouting Brigade Bill) which will surely, if suitably suckled and nurtured, blossom gloriously into a 1st class Rudder or Tiller by which alone Tottering Ship of State may be enabled to avoid those gins and pit-falls which lurk like greedy devils in every dark corner of the political arena and, at the last, rise (ship of course, not devils), soaring triumphant over all Earthly considerations, to its predestined Shrine in the Hearts of A Loving People.

Dr. Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., as every diligent reader of your excellent paper will agree, is not a complementary fellow, and indeed greatly the reverse. But he said above sentence or rather "Period" is best and finest he has ever read in any language alive or dead. I make no such claim as that. It is good certainly, and for me to deny that would be mere Mock Affectation. And it was written by me without exterior aid, though Captain Beresford, S. and T. Corps, corrected 2 small grammars.

As usual Sergeant Higgins, S. and T. Corps, was merely sneery. He said (clearly in sarcasm) "*Marvellous !!!* Incomprehensibly *Marvellous !!!!* It makes my cerebellum curdle. But you ought not to have brought in that bit about avoiding gins. You'll have Mr. Boord after you and Mr. Gordon too. And there's the Cat and Barrel Firm as well. They'll prosecute you for criminal libel you mark my words. Besides its sold in the E. F. canteens. Its a deliberate attack on Government methods." He was about to say more but being rather disgusted I went into the office.

PICHE LAI, B.A.

XIX.

Is All Well with the Mesopotamian Railway System ???

Far be it from a mere babu to decide this Burning Query. So I must regretfully decline to do, but, in lieu, will with permission of your Good Readers (or indeed without such, if absolutely necessary) spin a petty yarn re self in this connection. I was recently ordered to return from Baghdad to Front per Railway System. conveying 3 mules and 2 Indian drabis (*i.e.*, drivers or muleteers) we arrived in Baghdad Railway Station at 3-10 p.m. punct. where we were informed that train didn't go till morning after ! ! ! !

Naturally I drew attention of O. C. Railway Stn. to this sickening Dilemma, and urgent necessity of those mules to replace casualties from hostile recent shell-fires, etc., etc., but found him to be utterly straight-laced, and hide-bound with "red tapes," and refused unequivocally to despatch special train even if requested personally by H. E. The Arch Angel Gabriel. At about 4 a.m. day after, the train came in, and proceeded to come in, and go out again for 1 hour 47 min. At the end of this period we were ordered to mount ourselves, so I ran along seeking out a 2nd class compartment to which I am entitled by A.R. I.* (Vol. X.) and to great horror found nothing but dirty old wagons mainly without roofs and highly septic. So I said to that same officer, "When are 2nd class carriages coming please, and excuse troubling, for I am thereto entitled by A.R.I. Vol. X," When I had explained this to him thoroughly, and he had examined my Pass, he made this remarkable speech saying with marked courtesy "Pray tell me, fair

* Army Regulations of India.—EDITOR.

Sir, whether it is for yourself, or the drivers, or the mules or for all three, you desire this 2nd class accommodation, for I have no copy of A.R.I. you refer to." Then, before I was even able to answer, he fled into a furious passion without cause, asking me whether the blasted donkeys were on the train and, if not, why not, or he would place me into arrest that very time. Comment is surely superfluous.

So I went and found the drabis and gave orders accordingly. I also instructed to them to brush and scrub and comb those mules with energy and discrimination, and other similar disciplines, to which one tartly replied (in vernacular of course) "you may go, babu ji, and read and write your books, which work is doubtless known to you but in the matter of mules, do not seek to instruct us, as we are too old to learn new ways." In the end after some wheedling and cajoling, but more by violence and intimidation, those mules were induced to enter into one wagon, and the two mulcteers into another. For my part, not wishing to hob and nob with those low fellows, I ascended into a third, which was rather empty by good luck.

But soon a squadron of 11 privates and 1 corporal also ascended, and, after some silly quizzing and buffoneries to me, sat down. The corporal in particular was to me a source (or fount) of acute exacerbation. In fact during whole journey he was what I might appropriately term a "carking canker-worm of Care." He firstly sat down in an Indian fashion opposite in front of me, who was in the corner eating some dhal (urad) and chupattis, and continued to gaze upon me so closely, and smile in a senseless manner. I said oftentimes to him "Why do you so stare and glare so? Have you never before espied a human man eating his victual?" He said "Alas! No one like you." He also informed me that the Study of Indian Habitants was his unique passion, and that he was preparing to write a book in blank verse on their Habits and Customs and Facial Abnormalities and Table Manners." He further asked me that "Are you a heathen, and bow down to wood



"Alas! No one like you."

and stone," to which I declined peremptorily to return any answer. Finally he said (can you imagine such ignorance?) "Is it the Mahommedans on Hindus that are canniballs, for I can never remember? !!!!!"

After, this, I turned around and sat with my face in the corner, although very comfortless and sweaty, and continued to pray humbly and contritely that one Thunderclap or other mark of Divine Displeasure may wither and delete him on that very spot, him and his grossly rude confederates to boot. This however did not take place. After many hours, the train arrived at a large iron tank and some heaps of coal and also some tents, G.S. This was Railway Terminus for me, so having alighted I proceeded to search those lazy laggards of drabis. I walked from one end to another of whole train, but there they were not, and indeed I could not see that wagon on which they had ascended, though mules were there all the same. So with some interior qualms, I reported whole matter to O.C. Railway station (a lieutenant). He answered in a quite slap-dashy manner "Oh I expect the wagon was detached (as if it was a mere nothing). Anyway, get the mules out, and the men will probably arrive to-night or to-morrow morning!"

After vainly demonstrating to him that I am not of menial but clerical staff and quite *infra dig* to extract equines of any kind from Ry. Wagon he, like his fellow in Baghdad, became most unwarrantably abusive. So at last my dander became absolutely roused and I said "very good all right sir. If you will kindly favour by written order in triplicate that such action is necessary for Public Convenience and Common Weal, I shall myself educe those mules." So in the end he did so in sextuplicate saying "you might lose some copies on journey." So, followed by him and other inquisitive loafers appearing to be his sycophantic minions, I approached to wagon, whose door was open and 3 mules inside standing up. Without least hesitation, I entered into wagon and approached towards the smallest mule, chirping and carolling in a caressing fashion, so as to ensnare confidence into those brutes. "Woa Woa," I was saying, "Come along gee-up, Woa. Asti, Asti, Tchh, Tchh," etc. Also whistling with teeth, after the manner of hostlers and horsemen. All three listened with great attention, including that small one who hitherto, after the senseless habits of all equines, had been masticating one wooden board, the property of the Ry. Co., and they all turned their faces towards me, and began to bray and winny in a most amiable and welcoming manner. So, emboldened by these manifestations (which were, I may now say, utterly deceitful and factitious) I, fixing the small mule by the power of the human eye, tapped with my left hand upon his rump in token of affection and good-fellowship. And what was the response of that atrocious devil (mule) you may ask? Without any provocation, and with shrill squealings he kicked both his legs at me with deadly vim and fatal purpose, aiming at abdomen, and, if I had not exercised superhuman gymnastic alacrity, I should doubtless now be inditing not earthly letter but Celestial Epistle in Paradise perhaps. When I recovered to great extent, I found that the force of that blow had wafted me about 27 or 26 yards outside that wagon. Secondly, I was highly disgusted to see

all those bystanders (including Brit. Off.) gigling and smirking and sniggering and shouting and laughing and holding their stomachs, and bending to and fro and in short exhibiting proofs of unbridled merriment and gaieties. That is British humour !!! You may tell to one of that nation some very droll and comical tales, and he will turn a face of inquisitive wood when you have finished, and say "yes, what happened then?" On the other hand if one human man (and brother) will escape death or torture by a mere hand's turn (and his own agility) then that is very funny!!!! Ha Ha!!!! "Faugh and Pshaw," say I and indeed that is what I did say with pardonable bitterness to those merry-making wantons. I also said to lieutenant "as I have diagnosed one mule (at least) to be suffering from hydrophobia or other madness, I shall not extract them without corroboratory wire from A. D. S. and T."

He said "Who might that be?"

Without commenting on this deplorable nescience, I told him "Asst. Director of Supply and Transport." He said "But the train will go on, and your mules will go to Samara."

I said "Sir, as to this, I am very sorry." (This I may state freely was a thundering fib, I being entirely cock-a-hoop at such unexpected Good-Fortune) "But what can mortal man do? My life is not mine, but dedicated to State. Even if I wished I cannot flick it away like the vain bauble of an empty hour."

After begging me (why God knows) to repeat this observation, that officer said "very good. We will unload your mules."

At this, becoming rather disquiet, I said "Please, take good care. It is not right in my opinion to incur such perilous risks to your good soldiers. Also there is no food here, and they will perhaps die from inanition. Thirdly who is going to tend them and scrub them? I have not got the trick, nor will I attempt such, without corroborating wire from A.D.S. and T. Fourthly, I do not believe, after examining them more minutely, that they are my mules in the least but some other ones. In fact I am cocksure."

But what use is there in logical arguments to a fellow stuffed with waywardness and bigotry? He said "Pull 'em out," and so some soldiers went in and, after a short stampede, mules were produced upon platform. Then that lieutenant said "What were your mules like?"

I said "compared to these, they were very unlikely. They were tall, and slender, and gracefully elegant." He said "In fact, the new X-pattern mule?" Not knowing exactly what was meant by this insinuation, I said "Also in colour they were quite another thing."

He said "What colour?"

Now, here I made an error for, meaning to say "strawberry-bay," I said "Raspberry-bay," and I firmly believe that, from this juncture, that lieutenant began to wonder whether I was or not speaking truthfully, for he said "Any brands?" with a highly suspicious air.

I said "yes Letter P under belly of each," whereat he laughed heartily, and, instead of examining in that place, he exhibited to me one label on head-collar of each, with address superscribed. He said "your division, I believe."

This I could not deny, for it was written on the Ry. Pass.

That officer then after stating that he could not sufficiently admire my hyper-scrupulosity in refraining from claiming property concerning the ownership of which there could be the least doubt, said "I now have great pleasure in entrusting these 3 mules into your care. I need not say that I shall watch their careers in the services of Our Gracious King-Emperor with the tenderness and jealousy of a Foster-Parent." With that he handed to me the reins of front mule.

I said "Thank you Sir." Indeed what else could I say?

After that we had some hot arguments re animal rations. I said they are entitled to both fodder and forage. He said "what's the difference?" So I told him, but he stated that he could not believe me in totum. Then a discussion arose, that are they "C" or "D" class, I said "C" emphatically

and no shadow of doubt, though inwardly I was rather uncertain whether it is not "B" after all. He said "D" and invited me to quote your para and subsection, or a duly certified True Copy of Routine Order. Otherwise you can't have any. Among other indignities I was compelled by that O. C. Ry. Stn., to take mules to exercise. Now this is, in my opinion, an unlawful command, and I have duly reported him per official channel. On the road outside the camp I met a soldier riding on a bike.

I said to him (surreptitiously) "Excuse me, you appear to have a kind face. Do you want to have 3 mules? Because if so, I give them freely and without asking any *quid pro quo*, either expressed or implied."

He said, "Do I want 3 mules? What am I going to do with them? Eat 'em?"

I said "No, of course. You can ride them, or drive them, or pack them, etc. They are 1st class brutes, believe me."

He said "I do. You haven't got any other souvenirs to give away? No elephants to-day I suppose? Or I wouldn't mind a couple of Kangaroos. Mules I've never had a fancy for, thanking you kindly all the same."

Finding him implacable I said pointing to the direction of a desert "Please can you tell me whither that goes to?"

He said, after cogitation, "Oh Egypt, Africa, etc., *via* Arabia. On a walking tour are you?" Without waiting for an answer, he rode away.

My mind was soon made up. I would release those accursed animals, so that they should flee away into that desert, and trouble man no more. So I left go of rein straps, saying "Go in peace."

Anyone who is familiar with mules will not be surprised to learn that those very quadrupeds, who hitherto had been pulling my arms out of their pockets in their desire to decamp and scamper freely, now remained as still as stock or stone, and appeared to have no other wish but to ruminate sadly in that

very spot. So I became naturally incensed, and proceeded to collect earthly clods. Then raising my voice to its utmost gamut, I was throwing and pelting those clods upon them, in turn respectively. So in the end they did run off, and shortly divided into 2 parties or bands, one being of 2 mules and the other of 1 mule, until both disappeared surrounded by a dust-storm. Having dirtied my clothes rather, and placed my hat awry, I reported whole sad occurrence to O.C. Ry. Stn. How, suddenly becoming demented, they had overwhelmed me on the floor. As of their present location. I could not of course say, but last seen surrounded by Dust-Storms running in a north-westerly direction at about 32 miles per hour

But to relate all that occurred on the damnable day causes bitter sorrow to gush up in my heart and Unbidden Tears Do., Do., in my eyeballs. In the end two Arabians brought all three mules, claiming that said animals had browsed up more than 4 maunds of water-melons and bitten both those Arabians, and also one small-boy who was so sick, and demanding damages Rs. 300. So I referred them to Secretary of State for India, who would doubtless pay up as requested, and soon after those 2 missing drabis came, whom I placed into arrest on five charges.

Now what is the opinion of educated Indian readers? Is this a good Railway System or is it a bad one? Being subject to Military Law, my opinion is of course biassed and I will not express it. Private and confidential correspondence cordially invoked.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

XX.

Prepugnatory Pugilistics.

Possibly I have erewhile made reference before this to Mr. Yar Mahomed (permanent 5th grade S. and T. clerk) haven't I? If not, I must agree, a highly educated fellow, though not so recondite as myself on certain scholarships except perhaps Finance. For this reason, when D.D.O.* M.E.F. said "you can't draw this allowance, and this correspondence must now cease" (this was to me) I went to see that clerk, for he is in same Division, and asked him how that money may be obtained by hooks or by crooks. He said that "I will ruminate upon the matter and inform you by letter" and in due course I received a missive from him as per seq.

"Dear Lal,

Your highly suggestive Enigma re Pay of S. and T. clerks. I append answer herewith. No temporary clerk can ever, in spite of substantive vacancy, take the case for instance of Mr. so-and-so let us say, (permanent) promoted to such-and-such whether acting or temporary or even acting temporary so long as substantively antedated (to date of casualty is quite irreverent) such an one can elect to draw as well such and such temporary pay or acting pay for so and so grade and emoluments for intervening period whether or no, or the full substantive and emolumentary pay of the higher grade minus the differences of the 2 pays (excluding charge allowance if any) both for the intervening and subsequent periods whilst so acting whichever is bigger though of course latter is usually. Well and good. B on the other hand (temporary clerk) cannot do either

* Divisional Disbursing Officer, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force—
EDITOR.

and so cannot fail to be otherwise that B is strictly unentitled to any pay at all for intervening period. Please accept kind regards no trouble at all, really. Glad to be helpful Yar Mahomed."

Now B of course is myself, and I utterly dissent from this diagnosis in toto, so feeling rather disgusted, I went soon to Mr. Yar Mahomed and told him unmincingly that in my humble opinion you are a down-and-out stark liar, whereupon he became so impudent and overweening (this being to a guest let us recollect) that no loophole remained to an honourable chap except an instantaneous challenge which I did. He said sneerily "what with do you propose to battle? Office Rulers and clips, paper, eh?" Being besides myself owing to Passion, I roared, "Look to it. Take heed to yourself, for I am not a man to trifle to. I say swords and bayonets, and guns too if you like Also I insist No Quarters."

After copious verbage and suggestions on the part of bystanders and loafers we agreed to fight with "fisticuffs," i.e., "Boxing," after 10 days so as to have "Training." When this resolution became known in Army, great interest was evinced by all ranks from highest to lowest, and Q. M. Sergeant Higgins said to me "I will arrange whole bandobast you leave to me."

And in truth he did so, and I must here publicly tender some homages to that N.C.O., and retract some of those rather severe "Critiques" that I have already said re him in Warlike Snips and Snaps. Perhaps in heart he is after all not so bad. He said "The first thing is to get a 'trainer,' and for that, I know the very man, an old pug of the Bare knuckle Brigade."

What he meant God knows, but he introduced to me same day No. 1771 Private Cocky Lemon of the 118th Sanitary Section. Now he was (and is) what I might without fear of contradiction dub a stupefactions Oddity. Good Heavens! As to the visage he was weazened and crinkled and his left ear was distended to (approx) $\frac{7}{8}$ inches in fatness. Also his nose

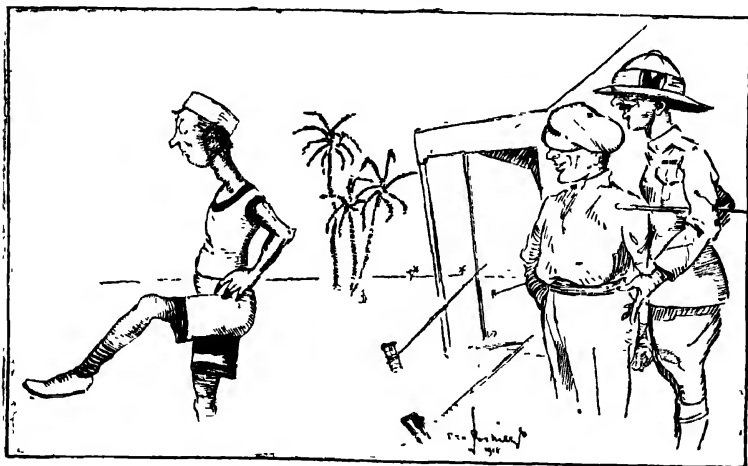
had become much displaced some decades previously, so he said, he was a champion pugilist of Bermondsey Basin (a popular district in England). On the whole, I became quite affectionately addicted to him, though he ever used to call me "Bitchy," without affix or prefix, and refer to Yar Mahomed as "the other nigger," but this I attribute more to ignorance than malice. His speech would have been entirely inapprehensible to any but a pukka philoloquist, but to me it was very soon child play, and I proceeded without demur to pursue his curriculums, taking notes in Army correspondence Book No. 152A, filling that book, and half one other (so far), so it is clear that the exiguous tenuity of Space Allotted to Warlike Snips and Snaps by a notoriously arbitrary Management will not suffice for such a Stupendious Compendium. I will merely say that now, after 9 days, Sergeant Higgins has informed me that Private Cocky Lemon (No. 1771) has expressed his satisfaction and laid a wager with Yar Mahomed's "trainer" that I (Piche Lal, B.A.), will be absolutely victorious. This is more welcome news to me, since that Pugilist was always so chary of downright praise to my face.

Even when, by supernatural skill and alacrity, I used to utterly overwhelm him (almost) by ripping wack (or wacks) on some or other tender part of his person (according to his instructions, he not caring one dot) and I would exultantly cry "What of that Blow, Mr. C. Lemon? Right good, Eh?" then he would only reply by some ambiguous and sardonic irrelevancy such as, *e.g.*, "Yes. Would have made a tidy dent in a pat o' butter."

He said this so often, that at length I explained to him pretty sharp, that my object in 'training' is not to make dents in pats, whether of butter or any other commodity. Furthermore, I am utterly indifferent whether those (hypothetical) dents may be tidy or untidy. But I do not think he thoroughly understood, for he subsequently merely transposed this to "Yes. Would

have made a saucy dimple in a bladder o' lard," so I said no more. He would also reply sometimes "Yes. Not too dusty." (Why "dusty" foresooth? And too dusty for what?) "Not too dusty," he would say, "if ye'd only covered up arterwards, an 'adn't mucked yer feet up." In moments of irresistible enthusiasm he used to say "*Now* we're torkin" (why "talking" when all the time we had been utterly mum-chance?)

Besides actual Pugilism I have been undergoing some Athletics named 'Swedish Drill By Numbers,' under tutorelage of Sergeant Higgins. This I may say is a very irking fatigue but seemingly highly essential for The Prize Ring. No I is Hopping on the left and right foot alternately, Hands on Hips, Left Foot Hop, Hop, Hop, Hop, etc., etc., up to about 2,000 Eops



"Hop, Hop, Hop."

No. II is Trunk-Bending and Stretching, *i.e.*, Resting the weight of the body on the fore part of the feet, hands behind the seams of the trousers, thumb to the front, but without restraint, bend smartly down until the head rests upon the right knee-bone, at the same time advancing the left foot to a distance of 56 inches. This should be a stealthy movement. But I shall not say more in case this fall into Enemy's Hands and afford

useful informations. So now we are come to the afternoon of that day preceding that next one of which in the morning the "Box" is to occur, and all is prepared and I am ready aye ready to eat Yar Mahomed. I need hardly add that this is highly metaphoric, being a figment of Cocky Lemon's dialect, and that under no circumstances I would be willing to assimilate per oram any portion of that fat-faced shrew. The corps Darzi or Indian tailor has fashioned suitable raiments, and in this respect I have evolved a very cunning strategy. It may not be known to generality of Readers that in a "Box," one is not permitted to hit *below the Belt*. "Good Heaven!" said I to Lemon, "and is there no regulation or Byelaw specifying exact latitude where such Belt shall be Belted?" He said (as usual illogically) "No use belting the belt, Sonny. Ye'd only be disqualified, 'sides cricking yer thumb on the buckle."

So I paid no further attention to him, but later on in the evening, I stood arrayed before his bemused eyes in a pair of particularly made pantaloons or "nicks" reaching up to Arm-pits, where the Belt was Belted, and having 2 small braces over shoulders.

I said in pardonable arrogance "where are you going to knock me now, Good Lemon? Nowhere except Head surely, because even Neck is defended by Buckle which (if you will permit to make a rather funny pun) is thus not only *Buckle* but *Buckler*.

He said (twice) "Strewth Albert" and (thrice) "Swelp me bob." Also some other criticisms which I judged to be of an indecorous character, and showed other unmistakable evidences of being deeply affected, but doubted lest the "Referee" might not allow it to be thus worn.

However he said "nothing like trying. Yer might say as its the custom of the niggers where yer comes from. I said "I have already decided to tell the Referee that it is strictly and implicitly enjoined to be thus worn in my Sacred Books, which is to a certain extent true."

He said that I was a "fly card" (fly paper ? ?) and also a "Ellover Proper Teaser" (???) which from his genial attitude, and facial contortions I judged to be terms of endearment, and then button-holding me in a strictly confidential air, he stated that if that was my little game, he had up his sleeve one or two little "gadgets" as might prove interesting, with that he proceeded to unfold to me much Ancient Lore re Art of Boxing. Now I will confess that much of this was obscure to me, but there was one Dodge which I understood thoroughly, and have decided to practise, *viz.* In the sole of left shoe proposed to be donned by the "Dodger," is cut near the toe a small slit into which may be pressed at will a pin of the variety known as "Pins, drawing," and if it be long one, all the better. This simple device enables one Boxer to stamp upon (and thereby puncture) one or more feet of his adversary who will, in either anger or sorrow, stoop down to comfort and cherish said punctured member. This is the chance of the other chap, whom we will now call "The Pricker," who should then, so Cocky Lemon says, come in and get busy with both hands. Furthermore if the head or face of The Prickee be very low down, the knee of the Pricker may be applied to it with signal success but this should only be done on the far side from the referee and even then is considered (so Cocky Lemon says) as not very sporty and only to be used as an Ultima Ratio though I need hardly point out that this phrase was selected by me, and not he. So it has been decided that what I shall do when this occurs, is to whip up a left hook to the snitch (this I think is nose, which in the case of Yar Mahomed is rather protrudescent) and then step in and take tea with his crop (this is slang for stomach) and knock it all out through the back of his neck.

Now this of course is merely a Phantastical Imagery, for as everyone knows a stomach (even however pulpy and jelliform) can only be locally displaced however shrewdly struck. In any case shortly afterwards Yar Mahomed will "take the Count" an abstruse phrase meaning apparently become senseless, and

I (Piche Lal B.A.) will be exclaimed "Victor" and Doctor Hatu Ram, I.S.M.D., after some cursory diagnostics upon my supine adversary, has promised to coil around my Brow a Garland or Coronet of suitable flowers and greens. Meantime my "Second" who will of course be Pte. C. Lemon will surreptitiously extract drawing pin so as to avoid useless discussions afterwards.

The "Referee" I had forgotten to say, will be a certain Company Sergeant Major and, (so Cocky Lemon says) quite above temptation, at any rate not less than Rs. 200 which is of course ex-questioned; which on the whole I am very glad for, as now that fatstomached viper (Yar Mahomed) cannot circumvent me by shameless corruption for I am sure he cannot afford Rs. 200. Nor can I, even if I wished, though I could have had if I had been paid a "living wage" for recent journalisms I will let you have full accounts of the *Glorious Tussle* next time.—
Yours very bellicosely.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

XXI.

Flabbergasting Fisticuffs.

Ne'er was (or, at any rate, hardly ever) was such a *Battle of Tritons*! No mere human verbage indited by mortal penmanship can describe it in the least!! Good God of Heavens!!!

I shall now proceed to furnish a full and unbiassed report of same, premising at same time that being highly emotionary and soulstirring, children, babys, ladys, and other weak-minded persons (or adicted to hystericalism) should read it with moderation and discretion. I need not expatitate upon the bitter squabble betwixt clerk Yar Mahomed and self, connected with pay of S. and T. clerks, for that is known to your good readers. But I will merely recapitulate that owing to his so gross and spitish sayings to my very face (as a guest) I was compelled to *challenge* him. So we started to "train," each and either, under skilled European supervisions, mine being Pte. Cocky Lemon, 128th Sanitary Section, and Eke Sergeant Higgins, S. and T. Corps, who has (to my amaze) turned out a regular trump and brick to boot, and taught me Hopping on the Left and Right Foot alternately by numbers and other stomatic contortions already described. Yar Mahomed's "trainer" was a low class company cook of Divisional Cyclist Coy.

Now excepting a certain Government ghi contractor resident in Fatehpur (a martyr to dropsicle elephantiasis, so not his fault, poor fellow) Yar Mahomed is, as the S and T. Corps know full well, *The Fattiest Man in Hindustan*. As Cocky Lemon said, he was "a soft thing" (metaphirically) and I agreed with him (literally). So on the day specificated for the Encounter at the place designated—a small palm forest—I arrived in a very cockal oopish mood, thinking he (Yar Mahomed) will

never be so impudent to pit his fat body against mine. But Lo ! on arrival, there he was ! and not so fat as formerly by 2 or 3 stones, I should think, with a nasty and vindictive mien. However I was quite dauntless, and saluted him in courtesy, as is only chivalrous in all sorts of "duellos." To which he replied by a most offensive wave of the bloated hand "Stand easy. Stand easy. I will wave my senior rank for to-day" as if I were going to salute his senior rank, he being merely 5th grade, and me 7th grade, and soon for a cert 6th grade !! clearly the only reply was "Faugh," which I did twice.

Now I must here insinuate some parenthesis re Etiquette of Boxing. Firstly a Ring is necessary, (which is however square) made of ropes round palm-trees, so as to prevent escape of either protagonist when receiving bad drubbing. Besides this, there must be a Judge or Referee, 2 "seconds," 2 "thirds," and some other demi-officials including a "Timer," and a red-faced fellow whom they dubbed "The Booky," who kept on bawling and brawling, and not at all funny to me, but seemingly so to the others, (for there was a large crowd of sportive elements to see the tamasha) who continually laughed hilariously, and gave him notes and rupees lavishly. Besides all this there should be boxing gloves, sponges, buckets of (dirty) water, and some stools (for sitting purposes).

The two adversaries enter into the Ring, wearing overcoats, though very sultry, but this is one of the Etiquettes, and being seated on stools, the seconds of each (mine being Cocky Lemon) flap vehemently a towel, after the manner of a vernacular punkahwala, while the "third" (mine being Sergeant Higgins) forcibly intrudes sponge (after dipping in bucket) into mouth, twice or thrice, thereafter severely slapping calves of legs, to which I firstly hotly protested, but learnt also was part of Etiquette, so desisted, though in considerable pain.

After this the "Timer" entered the Ring carrying (a) one watch, (b) one whistle and (c) one large brass bell, examined (a) blew into (b) and tolled (c) with much vigour, and shortly occa-

sioned comparatively lull, wherein he vociferated with a clamant stridulosity only evinced by "The Booky," (temporarily quiescent). "Boxing championship of all Asia! Twenty-five round contest! On my left, Little Tich (!) on my right, Humpty Dumpty (!)" pointing coincidently with former appellation to me (!) and latter to Yar Mahomed (!)

Naturally I rose to impugn these slanderous and degrading nomenclatures, stating I was B. A. of Ancient and Hon'ble Varsity, and was going to say more, when pulled downwards by Cocky Lemon and Sergeant Higgins, who informed me it is quite out of order to address the judge before court had been declared open, or I would be disqualified *sine die*. So I sat down with fixed intention to bring up that point again at 1st opportunity.

Then that Judge or Referee (a staff sergeant major troubled with warts) ordered. "Get ready." On which coats were doffed, respectively on both sides. When it became evident to audience that I (Piche Lal, B A.) had donned such a pair of pantaloons as did in fact reach to arm-pits where Belt was belted (this being on my part a very sharp artifice and not at all forbidden by Rules) they began to joke and cry cacophoniously that Why didn't you assume Belt as Crown or Diadem upon Cranium top, by which device adversary would not have been allowed to hit me at all by Rules of Boxing (q. v.). If he did, then this is a "Fowl," and he is disqualified ipso facto flagrante delicto for "hitting below the belt." But that wartish Referee in spite of bitter protests both on my part and Cocky Lemon's, returned a stern non-possumus, saying "you can't wear your belt thus, so take it off and don't play a fool."

Now I do not necessarily insinuate that he had (or had not) received "illegal gratifications," or indeed any inducement previously from Yar Mahomed, but criticle Readers will agree that this was rather Suspicious Partiality. In the end, it was ordained that I should wear belt in same manner as Yar Mahomed. Then, if you please, Yar Mahomed's "second" (*vide*

above) laid an objection, *viz.*, that Buckle of Belt was too big and very coriaceous. He said "Why doesn't he wear a Dixie-cover, and have done with it?"

Now this is a large ironical cover to a Soldier's Stew-Pot about 15 in. long and 10 in. thick, so too absurd, and objection quite out of order. Nevertheless Referee (incredibly dictu) said "all right. He must either remove belt, or wear it a back-side-forward." So in the end, on expert advice from Cocky Lemon, I placed it inversely as stated, since he said "after all, he might hit you in the small of the Back, and then he'll remember it."

After that Boxing gloves were superinduced over hands of both contestants by "seconds" and "thirds," and then the "Timer" said "All Ready? Seconds out of the Ring! 1st Round! Time!"

Now it is laid down that, on this order, contestants shall vacate their corner, and meet in the middle to shake each other's hands, as though an introduction was being effected for the 1st time. This is, in my mind, an utterly senseless Etiquette, and very untasteful with a fellow like Yar Mahomed, but in the Regulations all the same, and anyone not doing is disqualified, so I made as though to do so, though not without repugnancies, both felt and expressed (facially), but when I was about to snatch that vile limb, what should do that double-faced viper, Yar Mahomed, but raise his left arm in a very minacious fashion, with the intention to strike me perfidiously.

Aghast at such dastardlihood, I hurriedly raised my own arms into correct posture for defence, and somehow Yar Mahomed's nose impinged plump and plain upon my right fist, and said organ began to shed blood intermittently but so scanty and trifling that why all that Gol Mal was made (*e. g.* Yar Mahomed dancing and shouting Fowl! Fowl! and Referee alternately blowing whistles and shouting and screaming to me so blameless "Go to your corners! Go to your corners! I warn you formerly! I warn you formerly!" when he had not done anything of the

sort, etc., etc.). In the end, the fight being stopped, and time deducted, a Court of Enquiry was instituted, at which, amongst others, my evidence was taken, I pointing out at great length and diagrammatically how I had remained Stark still and Yar Mahomed had forcibly (and foolishly) protruded his face and particularly nose against my utterly immobile fist, and how his hand was moving in a highly suspicious orbit, as already described, and hence I was compelled to take early measures of Defence not Defiance.

After many very grumpy strictures the Referee said "Get Ready. Fight on."

Upon which Yar Mahomed in a towering passion, rushed upon me and sought, as he himself shamelessly proclaimed to all and sundry, to knock my head off, and never was mortal in greater peril, and it was only by unearthly agility I was able to "About Turn" (in military parlance) and run hither, thither, with Yar Mahomed scampering behind and blowing fiercely on my nape of neck, while he attempted to fell me from the rear in a cowardly manner, on top of my cerebrum which was only preserved from being utterly cracked by excessive wagglng to and fro and vice versa, until I got an awful crick in my neck, round and round and round and each time on passing by Referee appealing vainly to that flinty-hearted and (in my opinion) corrupt and suborned official "A Fowl! A Fowl. I claim Fowl," until in the end, Yar Mahomed by favour of God, did in truth strike that very Buckle referred to above, and sprained Dexter Thumb as hoped for, and at same moment fell over one of his legs, which he subsequently slanderously stated to have been one of mine, extruded as a pit fall for that very object. After this, we both laid complaints for "Fowls" at each other's doors to Referee, and a long committee took place, but no decision. The attitude of the Referee towards self was I may say glaringly slighting. He would either not listen, or gaze upon me sneeringly, and so, becoming in the end rather shirty, I said that I could not under any concatenation of circumstances conceive come what may and was

continuing to speak when he rudely interrupted stating that he would "take my word for it, but any how, seconds out of the Ring ! Fight on !"

I opened my mouth to finish the rest of the sentence when it was reclosed by so severe and savagely ferocious buffet as would have killed a less robust personality, and nearly bereft me of all sense, causing me to bite my own tongue in imparalleled agony. This, as perhaps you will guess, was done by Yar Mahomed, who had crept up secretly. Now there are no known words of sufficient odium and opprobrium in English tongue (though of course many in Urdu, Persian, Bengalee, etc.) to adequately stigmatise so Vile and Bestial an Act, and the whole subject is so revolting, that I won't say any more about it. But can you imagine it ? There you have an honourable and magnanimous Indian gentleman, conversing politely, as in his undoubted right, with Referee, and then to savagely knock his widely overt jaw-bone, making him to nash his teeth, and cut his tongue in two, depriving him at one swoop of his organ both of taste and loquacity, and indeed his chief ornament both from a pshy-scological and educational point. Good Heavens, this was too thick, and the Fighting and Ravishing Lust of Myriads of Fierce Forbears suffused my whole Anatomy, and springing forward in the van, nothing could resist my devilish onrush. Indeed I was transformed (temporarily) into a Pukka Demon. I struck Yar Mahomed twice on the mamillary glands and thrice in the epigastric regions once luckily with my elbow (though by accident as of course this is not fair), once upon the femur, this also was unintentional and should have been an "uppercut," and many times upon his now blood-stained nasal proboscis. But in spite of all this, Yar Mahomed also fought bravely, and here and there we whirled and twirled, up and down, and forwards and backwards, and round the corner, until Yar Mahomed seizing me with both arms (an outrageous fowl) fell upon me on the ground (a worse fowl). Soon after the bell rang and seconds and thirds ran up and pulled us apart, No. 1 round being finished.

I sat upon the stool, and never in my life, I have been so worn-out and panting. When I had recovered a little, Cocky Lemon said in an emphatical manner. "Listen ter me. Don't you go mixing it up (?) like wot you did then. 'E's three times 'eavier than wot you are. None o' yer give-an'-take



"I had donned a pair of pants as I did reach to the armpit."

fibbing matches. Run away from 'im. Prop 'im off wiv a straight left. Thats yer game, and if yer can rip in a stiff jolt nahn then in 'is guts all the better. He also stated that he had stuck the tin-tack (as previously arranged between us, and a very acute device) "into your left shoe. All you got ter do is cover up well with both 'ands, step in, and let 'im 'ave the point in the middle o' the instep. 'E's sure ter stoop dahn, an' then yer can bring up yer knee in 'is face. But yer must be away from the Referee mind that, and when yer *do* let in 'ave it *let* 'im 'ave it. A reg'lar auctioneer, none o' yer fancy dabs."

At this moment the 2nd Round was called, and I decided to adopt the tin-tack tac-tics sine mora, for my dander was up, so shouting a "slogan" (or war-cry,) I rushed along, and in one second transfixed Yar Mahomed's foot as arranged and not only that, but that drawing pin (for such it was really) being affixed to my shoe in a slit only, became detached and stuck in Yar Mahomed. He (as justly surmised) stooped down yelling loudly and grasped that lacerated member, and at that very moment I, on the pretence of a high-stepping action, was enabled to strike him very hardly in the face with my knee-cap. Whereupon he staggered and was about to faint, and Cocky Lemon came to the side of the "Ring" and shouted "Bung 'im one on the ear-hole."

Not knowing which ear-hole he referred to, and anxious to fulfil his instructions without fail, I bunged him simultaneously on both ear-holes with a sort of scissors motion, which blow Cocky Lemon has since stated is an entirely new one, and never yet employed in History of The Ring, and then I, following further instructions, dotted him two in the slats upon which Yar Mahomed weeping bitterly fell down, and stated he would not fight any more with a devil, and indeed no more he did, and I was proclaimed Victor and carried back yelling and singing by that section of soldiery who, following Cocky Lemon's advice had laid wagers anent my fistic ability, headed by Cocky Lemon himself, who later on became very hyper-bibulous and declama-

tory, he and his myrmidous, and were (sadly) arrested by M. M. Police.

And so ended that ever memorable and Glorious Day, which you can take my word, will be hymned and hummed by unborn members of my family, until Time Herself is not.

I am of course hero and lion of hour, but not at all puffed-up or self-conscious, but quite natural, and as genial as ever to high and low. I forgot to say that Drawing Pin was adroitly recovered by Cocky Lemon in confusion, so no proof is forthcoming except a small puncture which I have repeatedly pointed out to Yar Mahomed may well have been the work of some busy bee, scorpion or other poisonous insect. All the same he has put in a crime report against me for "Maliciously causing grievous bodily harm to a person subject to Military Law." But as Cocky Lemon tersely says "Prove it."

I hope that you and your family (if any) are keeping good health.

Yours affectionately,
PICHE LAL, B.A.

XXII.

An Aquatical Pick-nick.

To the usual (civil) man-of-the-street, and of course woman-of-the-street too, will perhaps come as a rather surprize to learn that we Rough-and-Tough Soldiers being so imbrued and absorbed upon all Military Learning and Sciences, and continuously searching for marshall Glories and Renowns (or else a Warrior's Honoured Tomb) that we can have either leisure or any liking to nurture seeds of Love in our bosoms at all. But this is not so entirely. Of course when "in contact with" savage enemy in our trenches, dug-outs, lunettes, barbettes, or mayhap Machicouli galleries such a state of things I need not say would be frowned at, and I would be the 1st to utterly depreciate and condemn it in toto. But when we are accorded few days leave on urgent private affairs to visit city of Baghdad (say) then we can do so with Honour to self, and impunity to the State. So I do not think that anyone can censor me, whatever Doctor Hatu Ram I.S.M.D. says (impudently). Indeed what harm can accrue that I am a Lover, if said Love does not hamper or interfere to Military Exigencies in the least? What indeed?

Without making bones about it, I may now say plump and plain that I feel a very strong love for Mademoiselle Pepistasia Meli, daughter of Mr. Meli and Mrs. (or Madame) Meli. They were all I am pleased to be able to affirm, keeping their healths quite robust, especially latter who, far from shrinking in hot weather as is usual custom, has become even ampler and more ponderous by 10 seers at least and that gown, which previously she was wearing with grace and elegance, now won't meet at the back, as I pointed out in a joky manner (but never for one instant departing from chaste and gentlemanlike decorum)

but seemingly she is rather crusty *re* this subject, and soon, after, Mad. Pipi as she is called in intimacy, invited me to inspect and give opinion upon some plants in pots on the verandah which I did. Indeed all the family (about 21, counting babes and sucklings) are very well except one old buddha who is suffering (so I say) from dhobi itch and I have compulsorily isolated him though not without protests and lachrymatorial laments. I do not however diagnose it as at all mortal if taken in time, and no relapse, as I told to him.

The Meli Manege (French for family) very kindly invited to stay in their house (say rather mansion) with only Rs. 2 p.d. for foods, which I accepted with alacrity, and there I abode during 6 days and what a Lovely Idyll !

There was at the start one cloud in my cup, *viz.*, that that Arabic menial previously referred to, informed me in strict confidence that the heart of Mad. Pipi had already been bestowed to a young vernacular snob called Habib Joo employed as interpreter by Ordnance Department, but when I ventilated such an imputation to Mad. Pipi in person she stated that she had never heard of such a thing and good Gracious what silly rot, and that she was altogether too young a maiden to think of Love and kindred subjects. Whereat I became highly delighted, and stated that I would purchase any item in the whole of Baghdad Bazaar to which she might feel fanciful. (In reason of course, *i.e.*, up to say Rs. 5) which she did, selecting with my entire approval an article of hosiery consisting of one neckerchief of patriotic colours, red, white, blue, etc., which she stated in French tongue to be a Jabot. But I was rather discontented when, after reaching into the familiar domicile, she affix it with pins to the back of her mother from the nape of neck downwards, with the aim (as I suspect shrewdly) to conceal, or at any rate mitigate those gaps and gapes caused by obesity, but quite unsuccessfully for, meaning to pin only gown and jabot (of course) she pinned those two. and body as well,

and so Mrs. (or Madame as she likes to be called) Meli became rather infuriated, and threw upon ground jabot and stamped upon, contemporaneously snipping her fingers at her offspring, and vituperating (as I deemed) in the Armenian dialect, until latter became red and bashful. All this time Mr. Meli was, for no apparent reason, laughing in such inordinate and inharmonious glee, bending hither and thither, and clasping own bosom with both hands as though someone may perhaps filch or steal it secretly, and coughing and gagging, that I thought perhaps he has become a lunatic and was about to take remedial measures, but before I could inaugurate such, Madame Meli went to him and furnished him with two energetic slaps upon his chaps (*i.e.* jowl) and then began to shred tears (of contrition obviously). In the end all was made up and forgiven, and we passed a jolly nice evening laughing and joking with great heartiness, though I was all the same rather displeased anent that jabot (Rs. 4 as. 12) all bespotted and lacerated to boot too, and (to make rather humorous quip or sally) by two boots *i.e.*, those of course of Madame Meli.

But what (as already stated) a Lovely Idyll all the same! What billing and cooing and gallivanting and serenading!! What coquetry and tender toying and dallying!!! One day we would sally to some Pleasant Pleasaunce (or bosky dell) in local Date-gardens, with nice trees and herbage whereupon, (the latter of course) we were wont to become seated but always, I need hardly say, in coy with Madame Meli on proprietorial grounds in order that Mad. Pipi's verginal honour might not be smirched by slanderous tongues, being espied so oftentimes with a strange and rather "dashing" military swain. At other times we were peregrinating along the Highways and Bighways of Baghdad Urban Distt. amidst all the Marts, Booths, etc., and we were entering in one shop, say, and ask the price of this-and-that or such-and-such from the dealer or monger *i/c* when suddenly

we would look at each others eyes, and ek dum (to use vernacularism) become oblivious of that merchandize and indeed all terrestrial drosses and trashes, and exit from shop smiling in mute ecstasy at each other, and *vice versa*, until some of those merchants began to kick up a slindy, but what wrecked we of those 2½d. hawkers and hucksters, as I told to them pretty sharp.

“Ay de mi!” as Mad. Pipi used to say in French tongue *i.e.* signifying “what a very nice time we did have.” The ultimate day of my sojourn was the Acme-of-All, for we had an aquatical picnick upon broad bosom of Tigris river. This I kept as a surprize or “bonne bouche” (French) having secretly rented for the day one boat or wherry and purchased a nice collation to eat and drink also. I said with a roguish smirk (to Madame and Melle Meli) “Now come with me please, and I warrant you I shall have up my sleeve a good lark for you two.” So they did, and were loud and shrill in adulation of my forethoughts and prodigality. I was going to row the oars, and they were going to steer the rudder, one on each side, so I had to instruct both in nautical terms, customs, etc. But soon we started, and I proceeded to issue usual marine orders to crew, such as “Belay there!” or “Avast,” and “Helm-a-larboard, Helm-a-starboard,” etc., etc., as was necessary to avoid obstacles, alien crafts, etc. But the fact is, that female ladies are no good to steer, and these two I must admit even below average, and not only that, but sometimes would fervently strive against each other, whereby of course nothing occurred, and minutely (even I might say secondly) instead of going up the stream as had been decided we were going down, and in the end we became enmeshed and convoluted in some riggings hanging down from a man-of-war of “Monitor” pattern, and arranged (I have no hesitation in saying) in a most negligent and land-lubberly bandobast, and a crying menace to all ship-pings in vicinity, and a colouy took place between me and two dirty and ill-dressed sailors or “jacktars” on this subject,

which became rather acrimonious, and indeed one of them threw a bottle and the other two pieces of coal thus contravening at least two General Routine Orders, and were also impertinent as well. So at the last we decided to go down the stream; and did so forthwith with skill and grace, my "oarage" evincing much complimentary encomiums from both ladies and also if I mistake not from passers-by on the bank.

When we had reached to suitable bit of arable land near Jewish Cemetery, we dismounted without mishap, and (as the Host) I busied myself to set in order the refection or tiffin,



"We did fall to."

whet the knives, furbish the spoons and crockeries until they shone again. And then how did we fall to and tuck-in and carouse Good Heavens! Sardines and Marie biscuits, and cocoa and sherbet, and Arrowroots and Liquorice pudding and piccalilly and boiled figs! But how can I categorize all the luscious comestibles? When all had eaten and drunk so much as or indeed more than human frame can assimilate, I extracted two bottles of a green sort of wine given to me by a local vintner of negroid descent and proposed to them in time honoured style to drink a Toast to myself who on the morrow after was returning to the Front, which they did in scenes of unbridled

enthusiasm, and so, after that, Madame Meli called for a Toast to Pipi, and Pipi do. do. for Madame, and I for each individually, and both collectedly, and so it went on with great jocularity. In the end having sung the National Anthem (2 verses) and a French song which Pipi stated was entirely indispensable and certainly very melodeous (6 verses or staves) we retired to the ship and Madame Meli emphatically affirmed that she would show me how to row, and in spite of protests did so, but regret to say that she shortly "caught" two contemporaneous "crabs," and was completely overturned (though painlessly). This downfall she attributed to faulty design of those iron oar-sockets attached upon the "bulwarks" (whose marine nomenclature I have for a moment forgotten) and proceeded to illustrate to me what was the matter exactly, but in doing so, (rashly) kneeled upon the "bulwark," and once more was turned turvey-topsey, but this time in the water amidst a cloud of foams and bubbles.

I was highly concerned about this and so of course Pipi too, who proceeded to scream bitterly, so we were both very astonished when the (unhatted) head of her mother appeared in the water close at hand and stated "Don't wait for me. I shall now swim a little and join you in a short time." After much argument (Pipi maintaining that her parent had become "witched" by an Evil Eye and would surely be drowned and weeping mournfully) that good lady was persuaded to swim to the adjacent shore and therefrom embarked once again. I was very surprised and pleased that she treated so bravely her mishap saying "Often happened like that, and she didn't care a button. As for absent Hat, it was certainly good one, but that I (Piche Lal, B.A.) would doubtless buy a new one," and indeed I had to, embellished with two yellow birds and about 1½ lbs. of counterfeit raspberries called technically, so Pipi said, a "Dolly Varden." So we returned singing blithesomely, though we had to leave the boat and walk back owing to opposing currents.

I will not demean myself to relate all the "Fare thee-wells," "Adieus" and "So-Longs" etc. etc. that we lovers so sadly said on the next morning for these were strictly confidential. But there is no doubt but that both our hearts were beating like one (heart) and were extremely tender and true. So I am not so hypochondriac as you would think after all.

No more at present.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

XXIII.

Dados and Other Troubles.

Now [Dados may be perhaps an enematical perplexity to Civil and Lay Readers, so I will now expound that this is (according to Captain Beresford) an ancient grecian adjecture signifying "Not Available" but now-a-day is designating *Ordinance Officer*.*

Now a public writer cannot be too wistful or vigilant what he indites in a condemnatorial strain. Certainly if so-and-so Bodv or such-and-such thing is *Good*, he may say so with impunity and propriety. But if it is *Bad*, he should remain chup (*i.e.*, silent) about it (if possible) so that peoples shant say 'Oho! what a slanderous chugal-khor or Indian back-bitter! Toba! Toba!' Take for instance S. and T. corps. I can say out pat. This is *Good*, and nobody shall deny. Indeed it is notorious that all the nations of Terraqueous Globe are, in recent days, casting on us a Pukka Cynosure of amazing and jealous eyes, aghast and agog.

Then there is the Ordinance Department. Now what I emphatically beg, we mustn't be too hard to them. There may be some excuses or extenuations, of which we are rather ignoring. We must make allowances for Human Negligencies, and Impudencies, and Shaitanis, and Malignancies. We can't make a Silky Purse out of Sow's Ear, or cull some figs from a thorn bush, believe me. Furthermore, I feel much pleasure in furnishing thus this public testimonial, that (more than once) I have received from the "Employees" (French word) of that Department quite polite and "chivaleresque" (another French

*EDITORIAL NOTE.—M^r. Piche Lal is clearly referring to the Deputy Assistant Director of Ordnance Services, a title borne by the Senior Ordnance Officer of a Division. This is commonly abbreviated to D.A.D.O.S.

word) treatments. For instance since about 11 months, one very senior warrent officer said to me very pleasantly "Sorry, boots, gun, not available. Expected shortly. Drop in again." Another time a man of private rank gave to me gratis and without asking any q.p.q. one new gas helmet. Certainly the latter was punctured, but I have no valid proof that that fellow was an accessory to that fact, and thanked him appropriately and hotly. In any case whatever we may inwardly think, are we not told (christians at any rate) we must love them that despitefully use you ?

With regard to myself I will now proceed to detail with judicious scrupulosity recent dealings with Ordinance Department.

On the 4-10-16 I indented for (on payment issue kindly note) kerchiefs, Hand, Bandanna, Diapered, 1 doz., and Hats, Smasher Felt, Dun, Australasian pattern, without badge, one, both being for self-wear. After going to Ordinance Depot bi-weekly to enquire *re* these consignments for about 4 months, I became fatigued and was wont to go only hebdomadally. But during this period, a circular Memo was recd. from Dados in office that "All Indents are Hereby Cancelled and Please Resubmit" ! Now I am no dullard in Technical Legalities, and I aver stoutly this is an illicit and illegitimate action (whether felony or misdemeanour I don't know) and indited Memo accordingly for signature of O.C. (Office copy attached for easy reference and return please).'

Reference your P-107 of 31st ultimo you should certainly not have destroyed my indent or indents in that way, as (until complied with) they are my own property and not yours and ergo, (legally) indestructible by your hands, when complied with, certainly are yours, and you can do what you like, or, as is more correct procedure, file in your office. Kindly note and don't do such thing again, if so, severe measures will be taken against you accordingly.

Now Captain Beresford (O.C.) was that day suffering, so I shrewdly surmise, from hepatitis or turgid liver. At any rate

he would not sign this memo, alleging it was all boshes or words to this effect (approximatively) and threw Memo-book into W. P. D. In those circumstances the only course open to a conscientious clerk is a policy of "Dilatoriation" which I did, and soon after the G.O.C. was present in lines and amicably chattering *re equines* to O.C., so I ran swiftly along with memo-book to those two, saluting in a highly military manner and reported to Captain Beresford "sir just a routine matter for signature, and forgive troubling but rather urgent." He was averring something about Argentinian mules versus Chinese ditto, and signed in due course, so the memo was despatched with some slight modifications of verbatue. Now you would naturally think Dados will reply "very sorry, won't do such things again. Kindly consider my P. 107 as cancelled," etc., etc. So I did, but what did he do, in fact? He reported Captain Beresford for impertinencies!!! *Good God!!!* Again would you not think Captain Beresford will surely be very choleric and irascible about this, and certainly so he was, but not with Dados, but with whom you may well ask? With me, Piche Lal, B.A.!!! In such circumstances, one can only bear and grin it, which I did, though rather inclined to do so on the reverse side of my face, as is imaginable, and being compelled willy-nilly to resubmit indent as per instructions of Dados. In the end (7 $\frac{3}{10}$ months) it was notified that consignment was available for issue, and so Q.M. Sergeant Higgins was instructed to draw accordingly, and what did he draw you will like to know? Did I get my hat, smasher or kerchiefs? Certainly not. What I received was hats, rattan, chinese coolies for the use of, without brims, one, and Bockers, knicker, dungaree, for Do. Do. "C" quality, 4 pairs. I returned these with a rather sardonic note from self pointing out I am not of Mongolian parentage in the least, hence articles were inapt and quite preposterous, but even to this day Dados is trying to make me to pay for them as part worn and no good for re-issue. There is also some jagra anent some spectacles I received

which, I am absolutely certain, were manufactured by Mahadevi, Sudder Bazar, Multan at As. 7 pies. 3 per spectacle, and one glass cracked already, and fell out same day in trying (vainly) to effect adjustment on to nasal bridge.

But this is no singular instance. What about wax, bees ; twine, country : balls, hemp : and leather, buffalo, curried, heavy, all needed since more than 6 months at least by poor Q.M. Sergt. Higgins. That N.C.O. and self do not always see with one eye, and have in past times been wont to disunions, ruptures, and imbroglios (to use classical phrase) but with regard to *Certain Crying Evils*, we are as Two Souls with but one single thought. Captain Beresford thinks so too, and I have heard him tell Dados to his very face "Dados, you are an official of dilatory habits, and no moral stability" (which is pretty strong censure certainly) but all the same I do not think he is sufficiently unbending and stern, not even interfering when my bicycle was abstracted by Dados but I shall have to firstly tell you about this bike which was a ladies one. I was in Baghdad on the 17-3-17 when I saw an Arabian pauper in urban limits, surreptitiously leading along a 1st class (effeminate) bike, so said to him inquisitively "What you do with that bike, and where from obtained, and how?" He said it has been delivered to my hands by my opulent uncle Shekh Hajji (Jemal) who seeks to sell it, for cash down, and no notes taken or Turkish moneys. Feeling a premonition in my heart that he has (without doubt) burglarized that bike, I cried in righteous fury "Speak the truth, cad and caitiff, or I will clap you in quod." So while he was lamenting and beating in bosom, I was thinking this is a clear Bakhshish from God : I have no pony, horse, mare, tat or indeed any domesticated quadruped, on which I may ride, such not being allowed by Regulations, which is one of the most scurrilous abnomities in whole of administration of Government of India and I, a highly accomplished pundit, must bitterly crouch myself on top of an A. T. cart, in undurable and hacking pains, while those fallow-brained, bucolical kot

dafadars, each on one pony, can come riding along crying out in a perky and rollicky fashion "Hullo, Peace to you Oh Babuji. I pray that your health is good" or another will say "Wah ! Wah ! Shabash ! Shabash ! Cling tightly Babuji, for the Road is rough, and may Allah guard you lest you fall." As if I was solicitating aid from their highly-overrated deities ! Pshaw !! Fiddledee !!! So in the end bought the bicycle for Rs. 2. Now there is not a scrap of doubt but that, in that purchase, I caused to accrue to the state benefits to an almost incredible extent, viz., after any march I was fresh as new pin, and thoroughly gluttonous for office work and my brain was very lucid and limpid, and not adled and bemused as before by excessive percussion of A.T.cart. This is a gain in *efficiency*. Then take wears and tears to government clothings which were very severe on A.T. cart. This is a gain in *L. S.D.* or at any rate *R. A. P.* Then suppose I had fallen off (which was a modern Myracle why I didn't) State would have had to pay pension to my dependants. This would be a *Budgetary* Gain. Finally, after this untimely demise, I had absolutely decided to endow that bike to The State in my last will and Testament. This would be a *Mechanical* gain, and certainly not less than Rs. 60, if repainted and a new pump. Altogether I have, after many obtuse calculations, discovered that nett (*i.e.*, gross) gain to the State by transaction was 2,130 rupees, or thereabout.

On the 6-8-17 I indented for two new tyres, what happened ? Dados said " Please state what is this Bicycle, and whose, and note you are unentitled to bicycles. Kindly hand over to Divisional Cyclist Coy. Added S. and T. Coy. copy to Dl. Cyclists' for information in reference to his indent No. 331.' Now cyclist company (after inspection) refused to accept same, as being womanly variety, and "low-gear," so Dados came and in spite of my bitter recriminations, forcibly abducted that bicycle and bestowed it to a low-class office peon of D. H. Q. who now bestrides round and round smirking on my bike.

Now I fully anticipate this story will not be credited by General Public, so all I can say is that a duly certified true copy of whole transaction will be sent to any "Doubting Thomas" on receipt of M.O. for Rs. 2 to cover exes.

All this occurred two months ago. but things have now somewhat become brighter. For instance I myself was chosen out of many scores of candidates to leave transport (tempy. T.) and become Acting Supply Agent, at that very Supply Depot wherefrom Dados draws rations. Here is clearly the Finger of God. Now from supply standpoint, rations are issued by weights and measures. One lb. meat=one other lb. meat: one tin ghi=one other tin ghi: etc., etc. But this is not so from a culinarian standpoint. A supply agent could (if he wished) issue to one unit 16 lbs. of chitterlings, 9 lb. of stomach skin, and 1½ armfuls of bones, assorted, and exclaim "There is your 42 lbs. meat kindly weight it if you wish, and then please go away for other units must now draw urgently." and that unit can't complain officially. He could also (if he wished) puncture with a pin-prick or similar implement, tins of bully beef, muttons, rabbits, etc. This should be done near the seam to defy detection and preferably in two places. The tins are then placed in the sun and in two days the contents are sour and rather frothy. He could make analogous bandobast *re* bread, by previous arrangements with head baker. He can easily arrange that there is no other jam but only Pilley's Household Mixture in 7lb. tins. I do not for 1 min. (mark me well) suggest that this is *bad*. It is merely that it is not *Jam*. As Mr. Pilley pertinently points out it is a *Mixture*, and as Mixtures go, it may be very nice to some people, and I do not for a moment believe all the stories concerning it. For instance one R. E. officer told me that, used in slab with a primer it has explosive qualities only slightly inferior to wet gun-cotton. Also a Canadian stretcher-bearer has been going about with a story that with his own personal fingers he has extracted out of 1 tin (then opened):—Hornets, or wasps, 7, beetles, 3, one long black stock

ing dearly marked F.P. (which he concludes with quite insufficient data belonged at one time to Miss Flossie Pilley the youngest daughter of the firm in question), various irregular portions of some igneous rocks, and a parboiled rodent of a sub-species hitherto reported as extinct (so he says).

As for complaints from Dados, we receive them almost diurnally, and twice in the day sometimes, but in all cases I have been able to prove complaint is absolutely groundless, and in many cases frivolous too, and now the Senior Supply Officer has got himself sick of Dados and has told him this correspondence must now cease forthwith and instantler.

With regard to the bike I reported (after some days) per official channel that Miss or Mademoiselle Pepistasia Meli of Baghdad, (who is of course my true light-of-love and affianced loadstar) had herself given me this bike as birthday-box since 6 months, *i.e.*, on 17-3-17 and begged to enclose an indictment against Dados for "Premeditated Rape of 1 Bicycle, female pattern, the property of a person subject to Military Law and Malversation of said bike to Improper Ends *i.e.*, Indian Peon." Soon after this, so I hear, Pipi has also laid an incrimination to same effect with Military Governor of Baghdad with many corroborating details that I was unaware of, including her father Mr. Meli who has also sworn that he himself gave the bike to Pipi as a prize for good marks in the Divinity class.

What will happen is of course still in the Womb of Time but I will let you know as soon as possible, and (if as I hope) I have promised to give the bike to Pipi and to Mr. Meli Rs. 25 and sworn a solemn oath (in writing) to utilise all my military influence to procure for him a licence from mil'y governour for soda-water-machine, and biliards-room manager for British troops. There is no more news from this sector, but I think on The Western Front things are very Promising.

I am with great cordiality, yours ever.

PICHE LAL, B.A.

XXIV.

Matrimonialities.

After much excogitations and internal communions I am settled since many days not to write some more "Snips and Snaps" at all ever. Partly I do not receive nearly sufficient emoluments for so doing, but also (and this is a more serious business) *i.e.* my Matrimony or Espousals, which will probably (D.V. and W. P. etc., etc.,) be inaugurated after few days only and will, I forsee quite plain, will be a great drawback if not millstone round the neck of my hitherto so nimble penholder (metaphor). To start, take the Honey Moon. This is a notorious Ocidental habit or Etiquette, and Pipi is determined to do so. Also her mother is very firm too in this connection. But I cannot see myself any sensibility in it. *Cui boni* (*i.e.* whats the good) of a gentleman and lady instead of remaining at the bride's parents nice commodious domicile in Baghdad Urban Limits, must abscond away to some distant and barbarious locality in order to love each other when they are married? What indeed? And, not only that, but in addition they should there remain "in ambushes" (as we say in army talk) for at least 4 days, during which period it is almost impossible to write any serious essays for high-class journal, and indeed such a course if carried to excess would be against Etiquette so Sergeant Higgins says.

Then after this Honey Moon, one is, of course, occupied in rearing children, babies, and sucklings, offsprings bairns, bachas, etc., and with that and S. and T. work in addition, I cannot see how there will be much spare liesures. Doubtless a family (if in large quantities) is a very serious undertaking and awfully expensive and dear with the high market prices so ubiquitous

over all the known Globe just nowadays. Indeed one may well enquire whether the affection and parental delight derivable from these "little folks" is equal to the trouble and expenses of performing them at all. If the family is so multitudinous as to surpass the bounds of Moderation and indeed Decency, I should say "No," otherwise "Yes," though far be it from me, good heavens, to decry or pass aspersions or strictures upon children, whether they may be in concrete or abstract. There is nobody dotes on them more than me I am sure. In fact I am quite silly over them. What is nicer than to play and gamble in company, with a well-scrubbed, dutiful, jocular, and tidy child or small brat or urchin? Yes, but on the other hand what is nastier than a dirty, indutiful, grumpy and untidy brat? What indeed? With regard to squalling and yelling too, they are rather provocative, and may be heard all over the house easily, and they are often doing this not only for no known cause but for very long periods, only stopping to inhale one or more hasty inspirations when necessary for the due generation of noise. This I have often times noticed when I was a mere stripling and I had some smaller relations of both sexes, how a mere trifle will predispose them to such actions vide above, such as pulling a wry face at them or snipping ones fingers jocundly.

We are going to spend the Honey Moon in Hinaidi in a house near the Incinerators and we hope to enjoy ourselves very much. I have not received so many wedding gifts or presents as I thought. Perhaps your good readers will wish to give presents, but may be nescient of pukka address so I will now say if sent to your office will be forwarded at early convenience thanking you anticipatorily. Each one will be acknowledged suitably by the recipient, you may be sure, to the donor or donors. No iron-mongeries, furnitures nor utensils of bulky sizes should be sent owing to postal regulations but jewelleries, watches (of either male or female pattern) neck-laces and other petty fall-lalls are quite suitable. If you don't know what to send just

walk to the P. O. and send a M. O. whatever you can afford, which you may be sure will be wisely and economically spent by the payee. For instance Captain Beresford very kindly gave a receipt on the Field Treasure Chest Officer which is highly convenient and has been "cashed" in full, which I was surprised for, as he had neglected to initial one erasure, though probably not intentionally. Sergeant Higgins has kindly given me two nice flowerpots and a ladies, "Boa" made with the feathers of some beautiful unknown bird which Pipi had promptly donned yesterday and caused much attraction in the streets of the Mesopotamian Metropolis, at which she made as though not to notice it at all, laughing and joking, but secretly highly delighted as also I was too. Certainly I am deeply in love with her, much more than formerly, and even her mother nowadays is very polite and tactful to me, so we are a very happy party because Mr. Meli is usually in his new Billiards and Mineral Water Factory all the day. But as for Doctor Hatu Ram!!! Well, well, I am utterly ashamed for him, for you will never guess what he had the mean impudence to give as wedding Donation to me. A brassy Hindu instrument for sprinkling water, milk or other liquor. You must blow through a hole in this, and the water, etc., becomes dissipated in spouts through some other small holes. Not only it is worth *new* at the *very most* As. 12 but undoubtedly "second-hand" too, and one side is bent crooked, and quite useless, even if I wanted to, which I deny in toto. He gave this at a tea-party and, as can be easily understood, I became rather shirty and refused to take it in the least. After this, sorry to say he rudely lost his temper and began to rail and chide me saying "Why will you not take it you must take it. It is a useful item and pretty also. Furthermore it is an expensive tool." I told him without any mincing that "I don't believe you and I won't take it, come what may." So in the end one of the guests named Madame Pijinsky a rather covetous lady took it and said "I will make it into a pepper-pot and if no good then the children

can employ it to play games," and after this Doctor Hatu Ram went off huffy.

The next day we received three consignments of which one was a big wood box marked "This side up! Be careful! Wedding Present" etc.. and there was Rs. 2 As. 6 "dunnage" to pay, so I and Pipi began to open it in glee, which was no easy business for it was surrounded with iron stripes upon which she cut her thumb pretty sharp which I knew quite well she would do and told her so and then we began to unpack rolls of blue papers and white and yellow papers all tied with strings to an extraordinary extent until in the middle there appeared a tin which seemed familiar to me, and indeed it was, being a tin of compressed ration beef with a label stating "For favour of mastication, assimilation and subsequent early report please (through the official channel)."

Now the ordinary man will say "Oh, what is the sense of that, eh?" as I did Well I will tell you, It was a joke! i.e. a facetious quip or whimsey! What a capital Joke is not it? Hee! Hee! Hah! Hah!!!

Now I like particularly Jokes and Funs, and am personally often times very jokey both in word and deed, but apish pranks and merryandrews of the above nature do not contain a scrap or tittle of funnyness except to a thorough-paced lunatick, and the only thing to do (from the point of view of *Infra Dig*) is to ignore it utterly. After all, it is not worth a second's thought. To begin with I am practically certain it was Doctor Hatu Ram, though it might be 5th grade clerk Yar Mahomed. But one or both or some other or others as the case may be, will certainly, whether singly or collectedly bitterly rue that day on which he or she or they did it. There is another point which should be noted *viz.*, "Government rations shall not be given away without the written endorsement of the supply officer concerned in duplicate, the original copy to be retained by the receiving party, and the duplicate, duly countersigned, forwarded by the issuer to the D. A. A. and Q. M. G. 3rd Echelon as a voucher

for the transaction." Now this was not complied with, so here we have an offence under the Indian Army Act now in force. I need not refer to the dunnage question which of course is nothing less than "Felonious larceny" or at any rate "Causing of malice prepense pecuniarily loss (Rs. 2 as. 6) to a person subject to Military Law," both very heinous crimes. I was explaining all this to Pipi, when all-of-a-sudden she proceeded to burst into laughter, and continued to do so until the arrival of her male parent who also was laughing with her for a long period bending too and fro and slapping his abdomen as if in great agony, so becoming lastly highly provoked and emitting some pretty tart remarks *re* their risible propensities. I went away.

But you can never tell what a lady will do next. I only hope that there is no heredity strain of madness in Pipi because her father is undoubtedly a queer fellow. However next morning she was so sweet and tender and stated it was all due to hystericalism that she laughed so heartily, being overjoyed at the prospect of so soon marrying to me. So please forgive, Duckie. (This is what she is calling me *i.e.* a phase of indearment, I said "yes I think I shall but don't do it once more, for I don't like it" which she said she would not, so all is happily arranged and "made-up," though I must say that there was no such excuse available for Mr. Meli, and told him so. There is one thing *re* Wedding Donations which is very disheartening, *i.e.*, with regard to multiplication of certain cheap items, *e.g.*, Pipi has received four umbrellas technically called "parrasols" and I have received 5 combined horns, shoe, and hooks button. Now either a button-hook or shoe-horn is a very nice object either in separations or in combinations but 1 or at any rate 2 is enough, and also I don't think Pipi is a great umbrella-user since it does not rain so much in this neighbourhood, and if it does do, she always goes into the house. Also there are some items of doubtful value, whether utilitarianarily or beautifully. E. G. *someone* (whom

I shan't say) has given to me a "fish-slice" (so he says). This is not what you would think, but a species of trowel or rather masonic tool. I should say about Rs. 3. Some people may be very fond of these, so I can only say I shall sell this for Rs. 3 if required (V. P. P.). Another has given to Pip! a handsome birds-cage or rather Aviary. Now I myself am very addicted to birds but I think that no one should now nourish birds or other mammals or reptiles for a hobby because foods are so dear so I will (patriotically) sell this too if required (Rs. 9 V. P. P.) I forgot to say it is 5ft. long and 3ft. thick and includes 3 perches and 5 pots or pans from which the birds may pick seeds very conveniently or whatever may be allotted to them by the Bird-Master. With regard to the war you will doubtless be glad to hear we have the situation well in hand.

It is hard to think I shall be a "Benedictine" in 4 days, but it is so all the same. This is my last snip or snap as I said before. I hope that your paper will go on all the same in spite of this.

Still yours affectionately,
PICHE LAL, B.A.

P. S.—After the consummation of Matrimony I suppose I shall not be B.A. any more but M.A. ? Kindly confirm.

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